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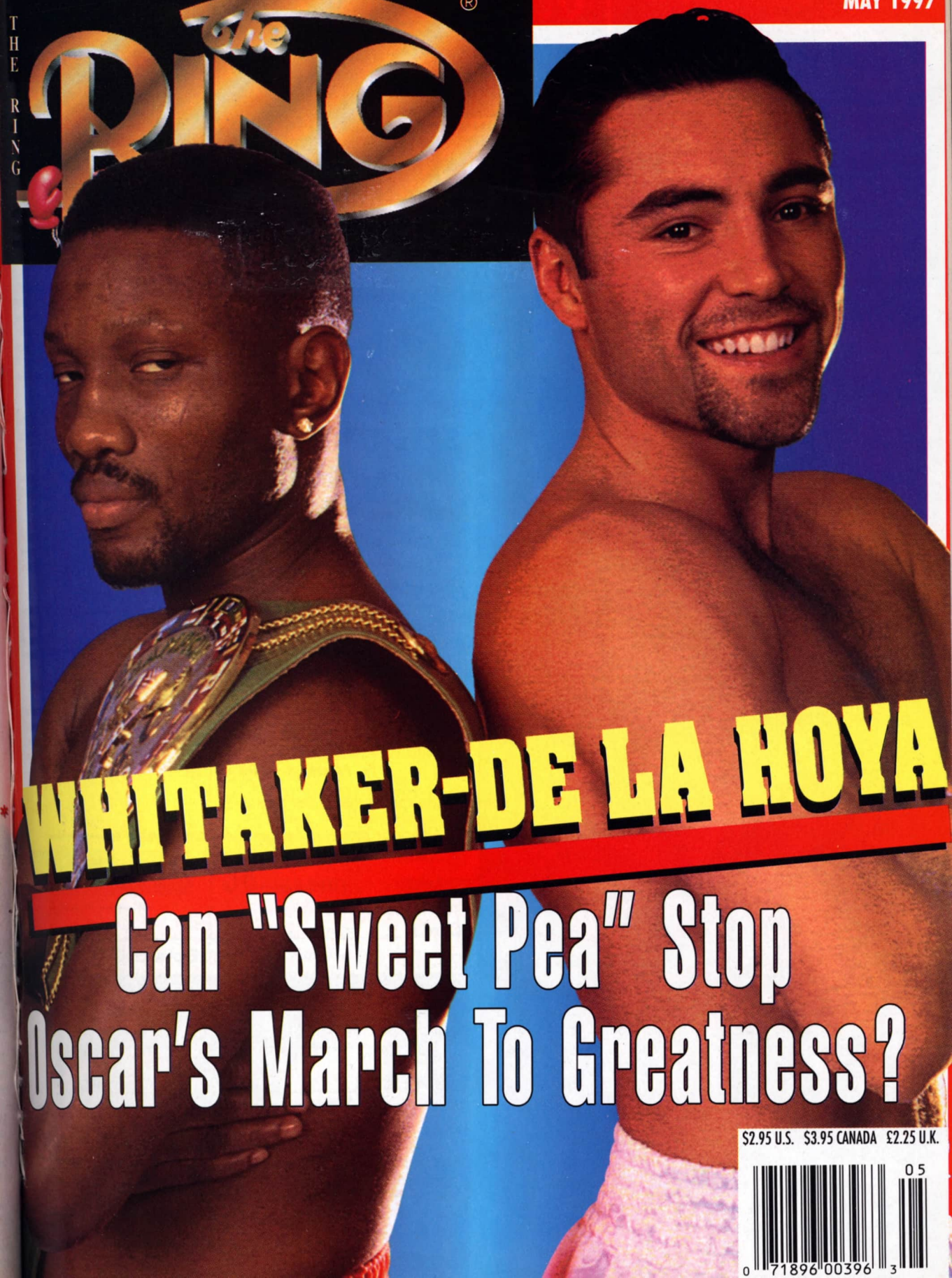

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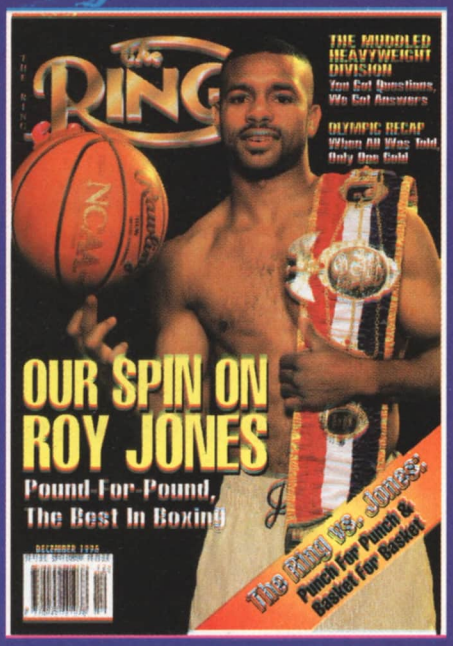

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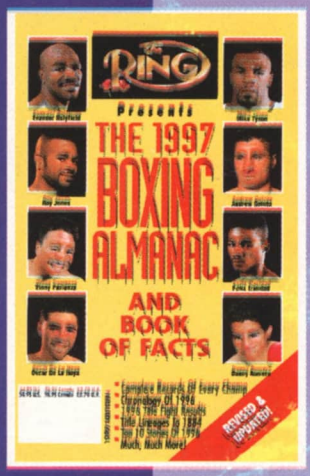

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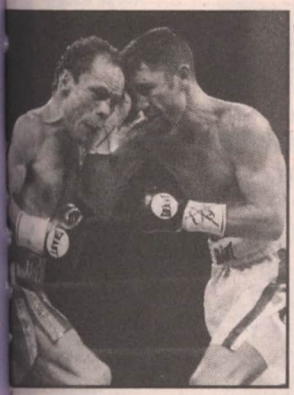

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Jason Ross Lavin

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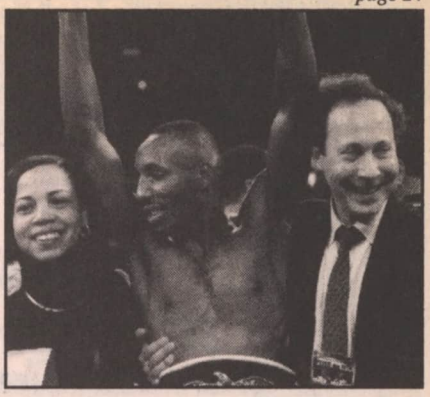

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RINGSIDE

I know I really love boxing because I spend so much time cursing it. Whenever I catch myself bemoaning the state of the game, I remind myself that things could be a lot worse. Boxing could be like other sports.

First of all, boxing is original in its sin. There were fixed fights 50 years before college kids were dumping basketball games. And why all the fuss about Dennis Rodman kicking a TV cameraman? Has everyone forgotten what Rock Newman did to that wire service shutterbug after Bowe-Holyfield I?

But boxing doesn't have to be bad to be fun. For instance, fighters always manage to say the darndest things. You ever see one of those between-periods interviews with hockey players? I'm convinced those guys *practice* being dull. Sure, Hector Camacho and James Toney can be crass and classless, but catch them in their sleep and they're still more quotable than anyone you can name from the Phoenix Coyotes. And one other thing about boxing's bad boys: Maybe Toney once threatened to kill his former manager, but he's always been fan-friendly. Conversely, baseball fans who attend Chicago White Sox games should be given cans of mace at the turnstiles just in case Albert Belle is having a bad hair day.

I love football as much as the next guy, but the NFL gets away with murder—almost literally. Are quarterbacks' helmets made of Coke-can aluminum or what? Every time I turn on the tube, Steve Young or Troy Aikman or Jim Kelly is stumbling toward his coach, the victim of a concussion that would land a professional fighter a 90-day suspension. But no worry; sideline snitch Jim Gray reports that your favorite QB is likely to be back in the huddle after the next commercial break. So what if, while calling signals, he sounds like Leon Spinks without his teeth. Such a *violent* sport—why doesn't somebody ban it?

Certain fight fans I know complain about the starting times of the main events of pay-per-view cards. At least Oscar De La Hoya, Mike Tyson, and Evander Holyfield are keeping you up on weekends. How stupid is it that a working stiff living on the East Coast can't watch the fourth quarter of Monday Night Football without struggling through sleep-depravation on Tuesday morning? Al Michaels: "There's the two-minute warning. It's the Vikings 14, the Lionzzzzzz … "

One last thing: I can't deny that a lot of undeserving boxers secure title shots. But if that's such a bad thing, why are other sports following the Sweet Science? The NFL adds another wild card slot to its playoff format every few years, and now baseball has the wild card, too. As for the NBA and NHL, a team that loses its first 20 games remains in contention for a playoff berth. And in college football, only the teams that lose to the Texas A&M girls flag football junior varsity don't qualify for a nationally televised bowl game.

The more I think about it, I like boxing just the way it is.

***

A fearless prediction from the man who gave you Tyson KO 1 Holyfield: De La Hoya W 12 Whitaker, even if he doesn't look that great doing it.

Steve Farhood
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 76, No. 5 May 1997

The RING

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SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
P.O. Box 910
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THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 76, No. 5, is published monthly, with an additional issue in December, by London Publishing Co., 7002 W. Butler Pike, Ambler, PA 19002. Periodicals rate postage paid at Ambler, PA 19002 and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034. Single copy price $2.95 ($3.95 in Canada, £2.25 in U.K.). Subscription price $32.45 in the U.S., $42.85 Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

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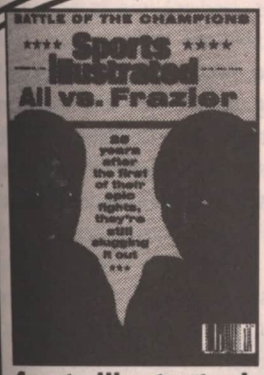

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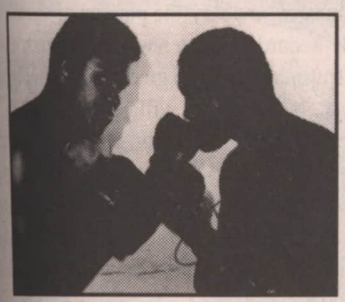

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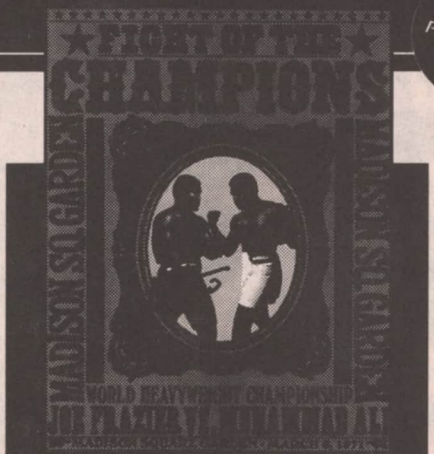

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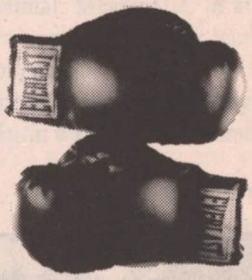

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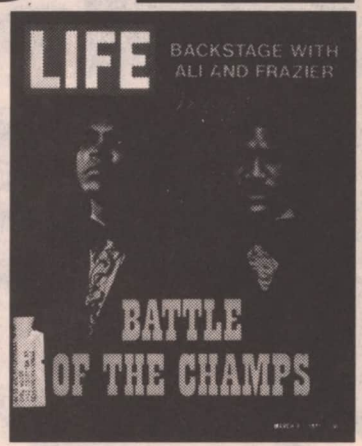

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COME OUT WRITING

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THE GOLDEN BOY

Everything is turning out golden for Oscar De La Hoya. It used to bother me that De La Hoya always seemed to have an edge, either fighting an opponent who wasn't at his best weight (Jesse James Leija, Genaro Hernandez) or one who was past his prime (Julio Cesar Chavez). I'm bothered no more. De La Hoya's clear-cut victory over Miguel Angel Gonzalez convinced me that "The Golden Boy" is meant for greatness.

Gonzalez was young, accomplished, and at his best fighting weight. Better yet, he tried all the way, pressuring De La Hoya but never looking a winner.

Maybe somebody better inform Pernell Whitaker before it's too late: It doesn't matter who De La Hoya fights. It doesn't matter when or at what weight. It doesn't matter what the media says. De La Hoya is dominating the '90s. He won't lose until boredom sets in.

ANGEL LUIS MAYSONET
Chicago, IL

NOT-SO-IRON MIKE

I read with interest Steve Farhood's column in the February issue. I must say I was surprised by his stance, though I should no longer be surprised by anything boxing writers say about Mike Tyson. As a group, the writers seem even more determined than the hero-hungry fans to label certain fighters all-time greats. Still, I was a bit thrown off when he accused those who declared Tyson to be the most overrated heavyweight of all-time as hitting below the belt. There can be little doubt that people have been overhyping Tyson for a long time.

Will victory in the May 3 rematch prove Tyson's greatness? Likely to Farhood. Not to me, though. Tyson is not a flawed fighter, but rather a limited one. And most definitely not a great one.

DON JUDSON
Providence, RI

Photo by Chris Farina

Oscar De La Hoya looked the part of a fighter after his impressive 12-round decision over the previously undefeated Miguel Angel Gonzalez in Las Vegas.

FORGET THE LITTLE GUYS

To those who decry the paucity of mainstream publicity accorded lighter-weight fighters, I offer a plain truth, born of the gladiatorial pit: Fighting is not a sport, and never will be.

Whether you admit it or not, human combat appeals to a primal recess of the psyche that craves witness to violent confrontation. Forget "the art of self-defense" rationale. As any manager worth his cut knows, technique sells hot dogs, and blood sells seats.

The relative handful of non-heavyweights who've garnered more than chump-change purses and minimal ink have been, almost without

exception, either high-profile Olympians or of the blood-and-guts breed: Robinson, LaMotta, Hagler, Chavez, and a certain old war horse said to possess hands of stone.

Is there any wonder why undersized technicians overpopulate undercards?

Recently, promoter Butch Lewis said that in the real boxing world, if you don't weigh 220 pounds, it's a buyer's market. That's as true today as it was a century ago.

JOHN BAROUGH
Cedar Rapids, IA

IMPRESSED WITH TUA

I was really impressed by David Tua's demolition of David Izonritei. Every bit as impressive as the heavyweight's performance was his manner after the big win. After 12 particularly brutal rounds of combat, Tua was humble, gracious, and, well, just a nice guy. I liked the way he took time while being interviewed to give his courageous opponent a friendly hug. In my book, he'll make a welcomed addition to the list of popular heavyweight champions. That should happen in about a year or so.

TEDDY MANN
Seaside Heights, NJ

THE BEAN AND CHRISTY

Hey, lay off Butterbean and Christy Martin! What have they done to deserve all the negative criticism? In this day and age, it's refreshing to see anybody who isn't afraid to fight whoever is put in front of him (or her). So many so-called champions run around saying they're the best, but they never fight top-notch opposition. As a result, all we get to see are mismatches or fights involving frauds like Juan Coggi, Luis Santana, and Giovanni Andrade. Worse yet, some champions fight only once or twice a year. I'll pay to see any fighter who doesn't fall into one of the aforementioned categories—regardless of their physical characteristics.

JASON B. NEGRON
Porterville, CA

Was the first Mike Rossman-Victor Galindez battle among the 100 greatest title fights of all-time? Most of Galindez' title bouts included some sort of drama.

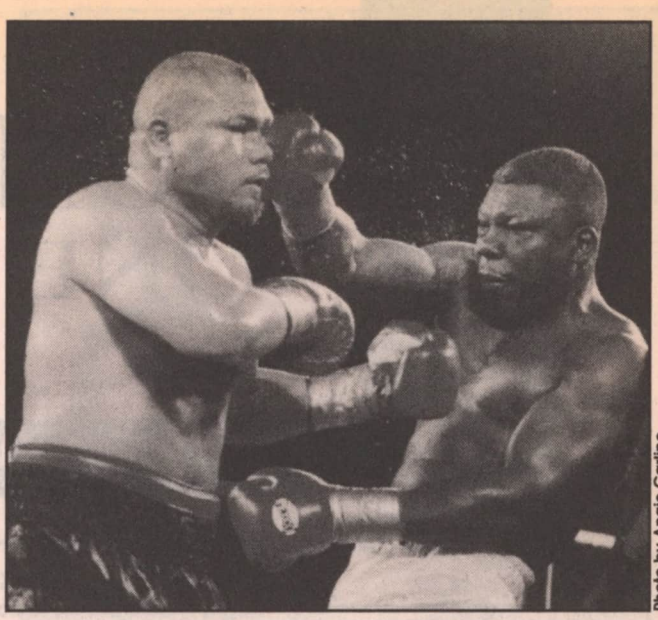


Photo by Angie Carlino

Unbeaten heavyweight David Tua (left) wore down one-time Olympic opponent David Izonritei, then won more fans by handling himself with class during his postfight interview on HBO.

I used to be a big fan of Christy Martin. That was until her fight on the Holyfield-Tyson undercard. She showed little or no class by taunting and teasing her opponent, Bethany Payne, after stopping her in the first round. Christy has said that her archenemy, Andrea DeShong, hurts women's boxing by snorting and walking around the ring like an animal. Meanwhile, in all my years of watching boxing, I've never seen a male fighter imitating his opponent's reaction to a knockout punch.

DeShong may be an embarrassment to women's boxing, but with her antics that night, Christy Martin was an embarrassment to boxing as a whole.

CARLTON W. GRIFFITH
Las Vegas, NV

THE BEST TITLE FIGHTS

Your compilation of the 100 greatest title fights of all-time (Holiday 1996) was compelling. I found myself agreeing with 90 percent of your selections. In regard to the 10 fights I found fault with, however, you seemed preoccupied with pugilistic flukes, oddities, and one-punch knockouts involving bouts that were either unexciting or non-competitive.

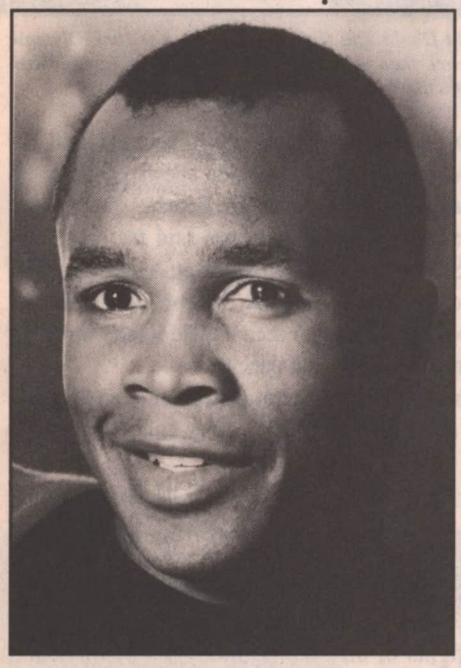
May I offer in their stead: Benny Lynch KO 13 Peter Kane; Lupe Pintor W 15 Albert Davila; Danny Lopez KO 7 Jose Torres; Salvador Sanchez KO 8 Wilfredo Gomez; Ike Williams KO 6 Beau Jack; Chango Carmona KO 8 Mando Ramos; Julio Cesar Chavez KO 11 Edwin Rosario; Sugar Ray Robinson KO 13 Jake LaMotta; Victor Galindez KO 15 Richie Kates; and Mike Rossman KO 13 Victor Galindez.

DAN HANLEY
Hickory Hills, IL ■

ROUND ONE

THE CONTROVERSIAL CLASS OF '97

Since opening its doors a few years ago, the International Boxing Hall of Fame has remained controversy-free. That all changed in January, when Executive Director Ed Brophy announced the Class of '97, to be enshrined on Induction Weekend, June 6, 7, and 8, in Canastota, New York.



Sugar Ray Leonard

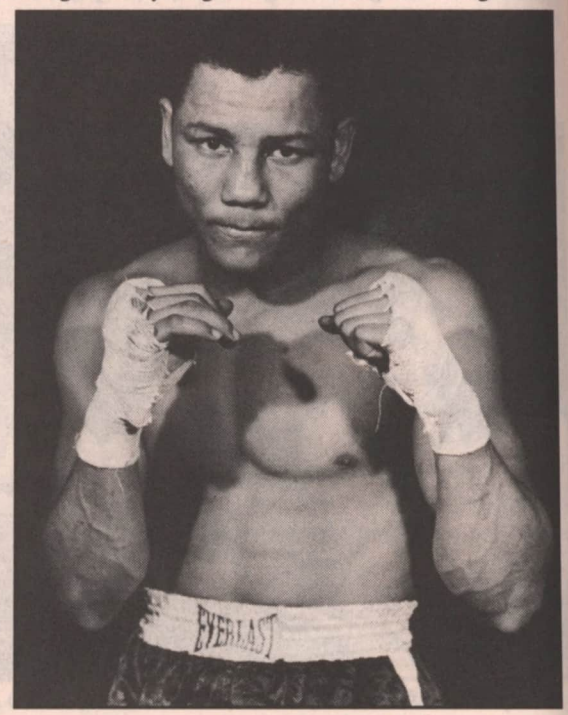
The selection of the living inductees in the modern fighter category, Ray Leonard and Jose Torres, caused a minor commotion, but only because Sugar Ray, retired since 1991, had a return bout scheduled for March 1 vs. Hector Camacho. But when it was learned that promoter Don King finished third on a slate of non-participants (with three of 35 to be elected), certain members of the media were outraged.

"Does this mean Frankie Carbo and Blinky Palermo should be elected?" Thomas Hauser, a vice president of the Boxing Writers Association of America, was quoted in the New York *Daily News*. (For reaction to King's induction, see stories beginning on page 32.)

The complete IBHF Class of '97:

Sugar Ray Leonard: Boxing's only five-division champion. Greatest fighter of the '80s beat, among others, Wilfred Benitez, Roberto Duran, Thomas Hearns, and Marvin Hagler. Record: 36-2-1 (25).

Jose Torres: Won world light heavyweight title in 1965, defeating Willie Pastrano. Made three defenses before losing to Dick Tiger. Record: 41-3-1 (29).



Jose Torres

Don King: Has promoted more than 300 world title fights, including Ali-Frazier III, Ali-Foreman, Leonard-Duran I, and most of Mike Tyson's major bouts. Remains game's most controversial power broker.

Pete Herman: Legend from New Orleans held world bantamweight crown from 1917 to 1920, then regained it in 1921. Beat, among others, Kid Williams, Joe Lynch, and Jimmy Wilde. Record: 94-26-14 (21) with 10 no-decisions.

Luis Rodriguez: Cuban boxing master dethroned world welterweight king Emile Griffith in 1963, only to lose back title three months later. Among his victims: Hurricane Carter, Curtis Cokes,

Bennie Briscoe. Died last year. Record: 107-13 (49) with 1 no-contest.

Chalky Wright: Mexican-born featherweight won world title in 1941, then lost it in '42 to Willie Pep. Fought everywhere, and against everyone. Record: 148-39-16 (74) with 1 no-contest.

Freddie Welsh: Lightweight from Wales campaigned mostly in USA and Canada. Won world title in 1914 by outpointing Willie Ritchie. Was dethroned by Benny Leonard in 1917. Record: 120-27-16 (30).

Freddie Miller: Cincinnati featherweight was a warrior of the world. Southpaw reigned from 1933 to '36, beating, among others, Baby Arizmendi, Tommy Paul, Petey Sarron, and Panama Al Brown. Record: 212-27-6 (44) with 1 no-contest.

Joe Jeannette: Among the first of the great black heavyweights. Campaigned from 1904-1919. Fought Jack Johnson eight times and Sam Langford 14 times. Record: 117-19-15 (66) with 5 no-decisions and 1 no-contest.

Tom Molineaux: Slave from South Carolina who traveled to England and engaged in two historic bouts vs. then-world champion Tom Cribb.

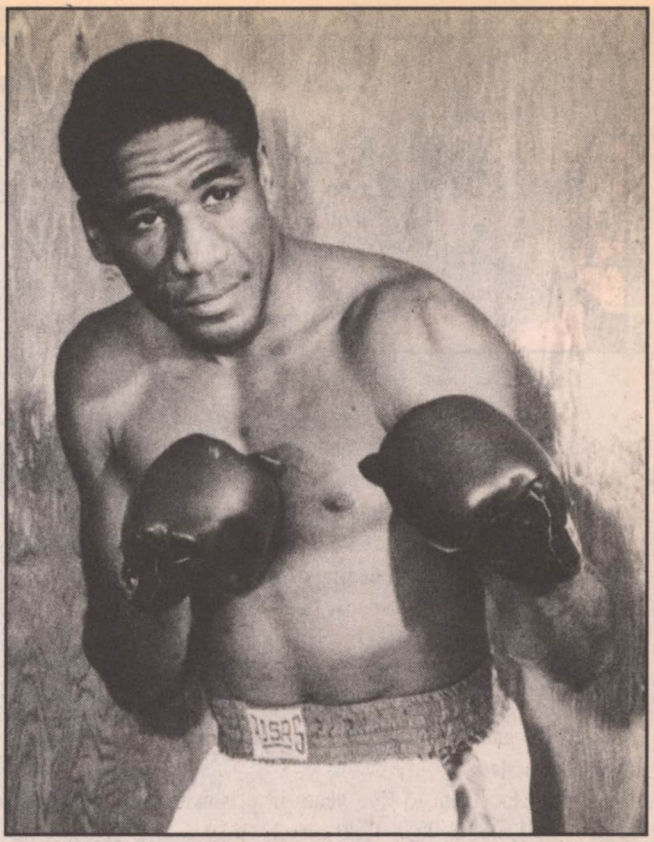
Dutch Sam: English-born fighter is credited with first using uppercut. Scaled 133 pounds, and regularly defeated far heavier opponents. Fought at the beginning of the 19th century.

Joe Humphreys: "Joe The Beaut" was the first of the great ring announcers. Worked from 1890 until his death in 1936.

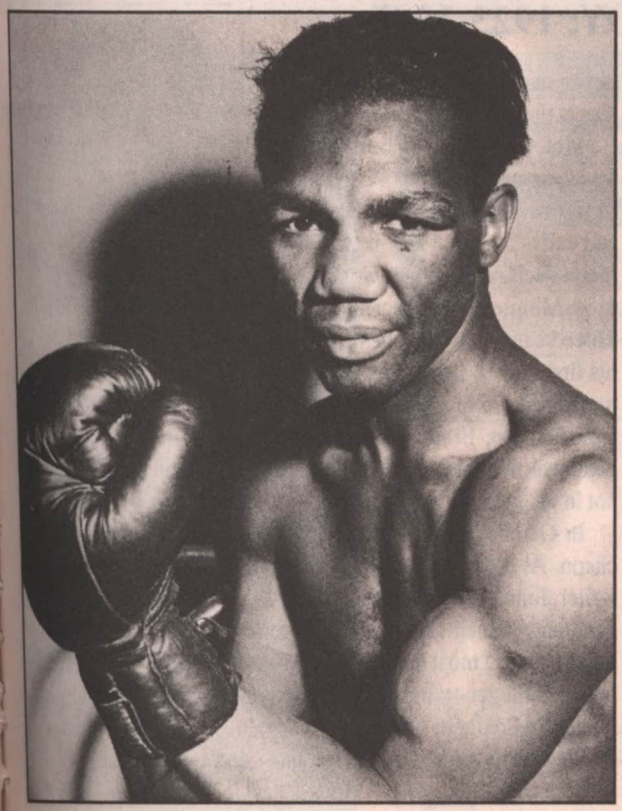
Richard Fox: Author and publisher of several boxing books, including *Famous Fights In The Prize Ring* (1877).

Those interested in receiving information regarding Induction Weekend should contact the International Boxing Hall of Fame at (315) 697-7095.

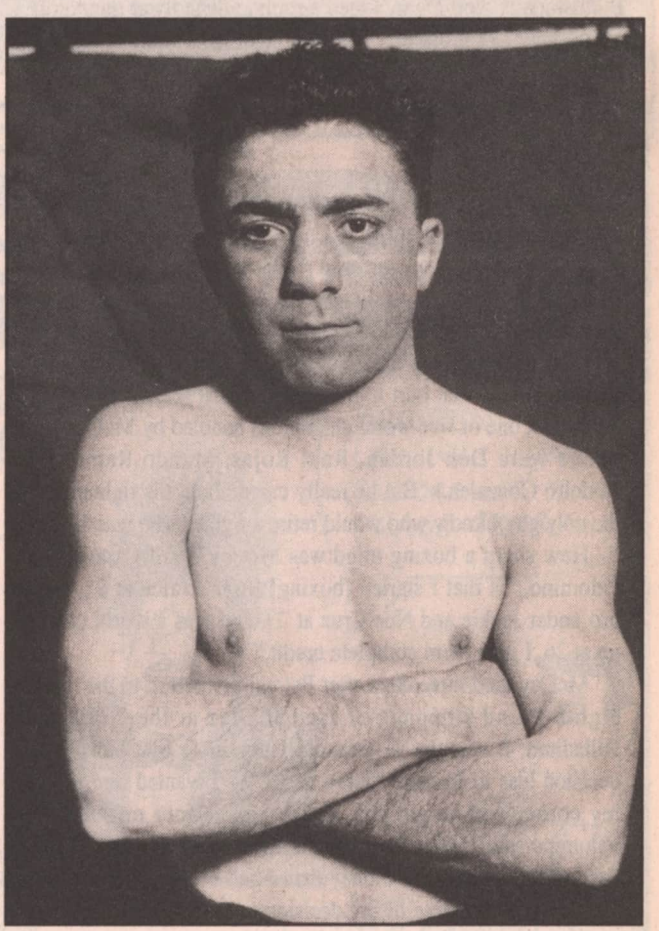
–Steve Farhood



Luis Rodriguez



Chalky Wright



Pete Herman

GOLOTA: THE TRIAL

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Golota: Trials and tribulations

By Poland's standards, Andrew Golota's trial was an absolute sensation. The country's most famous athlete—and the world's most foul-prone heavyweight—returned to his native land in January to face assault and armed robbery charges stemming from an incident in a Polish nightclub in 1990.

Golota's two epic low-blow carnivals with Riddick Bowe made him a notorious sensation in the sports world, but in Poland he became a hero.

The two-day trial brought out the hordes. Nearly 600 people crowded around the court building for Golota's arrival, and more than 100 press credentials were requested for the trial. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a newspaper in Warsaw, sent not only its top boxing writer, but its finest law specialist as well.

Golota did not disappoint, arriving at the court house in the tiny city of Wloclawek in a cherry-colored Lincoln Town Car, vulgar and gauche by Polish workingman standards, but befitting a superstar.

Golota faced up to five years in prison for the assault of Pawel Bialostocki. In a 1990 brawl, Golota, then 22, beat up Bialostocki after the man had torn his shirt. Golota then stole Bialostocki's clothing in a men's room, allegedly at gunpoint.

In order to get out of facing trial, Golota fled the country and took up residence in Chicago, where his career skyrocketed. All these years later, Golota decided to return to face the charges, spurred possibly by reassurances from Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, who met with the fighter in New York after the first fight with Bowe.

At the trial, Golota pleaded guilty to beating up Bialostocki, but denied ever pointing a gun. He also apologized to Bialostocki. The provincial court gave him a two-year suspended sentence and fined him the equivalent of $7,000; not bad, considering the millions he made from the Bowe fights.

"I am sorry; what I did was thoughtless," Golota told the court. "It was a burden on my conscience."

Even Bialostocki supported Golota. "I forgive him," Bialostocki said. "He was young. We have to understand it. I watched his last fight, and I wish him victory."

You'd never see that in America.

After the trial, Golota returned to Chicago. At the airport in Poland, he was sent off by hundreds of well-wishing fans who waved and chanted, "Andrzej, Andrzej, nie daj sie," which means "Andrew, Andrew, don't give up."

The Polish prosecutor, however, hasn't given up either. He filed suit in the appeals court in the city of Gdansk, seeking to force Golota to serve his two years in prison. If the prosecutor should win, don't expect Golota to return home just to sit in a jail cell. But also don't rule out Golota returning to Poland for a mega-fight someday.

–John Scheinman & Radoslaw Leniarski

JACKIE McCOY: 1923-1997

Jackie McCoy in 1969

Boxing lost one of the gentlemen of the game on January 13, when veteran Southern California manager and trainer Jackie McCoy died of cancer in Anaheim. He was 73.

Though never as publicized as Angelo Dundee, Emanuel Steward, or Eddie Futch, McCoy was among the most accomplished handlers of his era. "He stayed behind the scenes and was very quiet, and that hurt him on the national scene," said Carlos Palomino, one of five world champions handled by McCoy. (The others were Don Jordan, Raul Rojas, Mando Ramos, and Rodolfo Gonzalez.) "But he really cared about his fighters. He's the only guy I know who would retire a fighter who was 18-0."

How sharp a boxing mind was McCoy? "All I know," said Palomino, "is that I started [boxing] from scratch at 21, turned pro under Jackie and Noe Cruz at 23, and was a world champion at 26. I give them complete credit."

McCoy died three days after Palomino's return to the ring, an eighth-round stoppage of Ismael Diaz at the Hollywood Palladium. It was the 47-year-old Palomino's first bout since a decision loss to Roberto Duran in 1979. "I wanted him to be in my corner, but he got sick about a week into my training," Palomino said. "After the Duran fight, we had so many offers to fight for so much more money than I had ever made before. But Jackie was supportive of my decision to retire. He said to me, 'I never had a fighter retire while he was at the top of his game.'"

McCoy, who was born Warren Spaw, grew up in Los Angeles and fought as a bantamweight in the '40s and early-'50s. In 1950, he lost a 10-round decision to former world champion Manuel Ortiz in Hollywood. Three years later, he began managing his first fighter, lightweight Buddy Evatt. In addition to the aforementioned world champions, McCoy guided such contenders as Lou Filippo, Frankie Crawford, Monroe Brooks, Superfly Sandoval, Frankie and Tony Baltazar, and Cubanito Perez. When not in the gym, he worked as a longshoreman.

In October 1995, Forum Boxing honored McCoy at a luncheon. At the time, former longtime *Los Angeles Times* boxing writer John Hall described McCoy's fighters as being "managed and trained and taught by the most respected, best-liked, most honest, most humble, most dedicated, sweetest human being-manager-trainer-cornerman doubtless in the history of boxing in Southern California."

He will be missed by all, but most deeply by his fighters.

–Steve Farhood

THE BOXING WRITERS AWARDS

To the surprise of no one, the Boxing Writers Association of America announced that WBA heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield was voted the Edward J. Neil Award as 1996 Fighter of the Year. Holyfield was named on 74 of the 79 ballots. Roy Jones received three votes, with one each going to Junior Jones and Oscar De La Hoya.

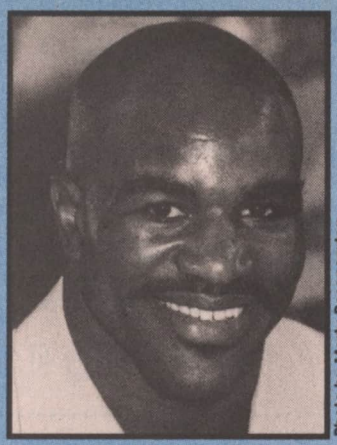


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Holyfield: The best of '96

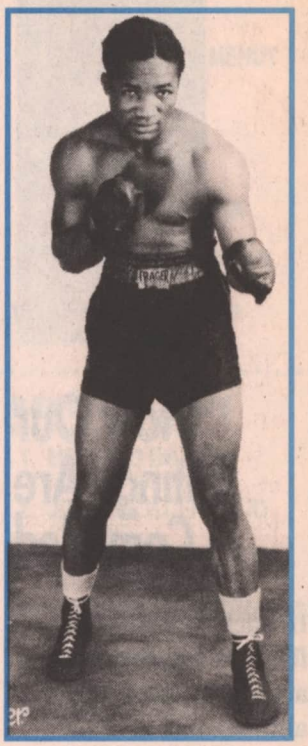
Holyfield's 11th-round stoppage of Mike Tyson was named Fight of the Year.

Holyfield's trainer, Don Turner, won the John F.X. Condon Award as Trainer of the Year. Angelo Dundee was honored with the James J. Walker Award for long and meritorious service to boxing. And Royce Feour of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* was named the winner of the Nat Fleischer Award for excellence in boxing journalism.

The winners will be honored at the BWAA's annual dinner, which is scheduled for April 4 in New York City.

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Former lightweight contender **Willie Joyce** died on December 5 in his native Gary, Indiana. He was 79. Joyce faced, among others, **Henry Armstrong, Lew Jenkins,** and **Ike Williams** ... Heavyweight **Andrew Golota** and cornerman **Sam Colonna** are suing **Riddick Bowe** and Madison Square Garden, claiming they were injured because Bowe was negligent in supervising his employees and because the Garden failed to provide adequate security during Bowe-Golota I in July. In a suit filed in New Jersey, Golota and Colonna are reportedly seeking $5-million for medical expenses and pain. Also named as defendants are Bowe's manager, **Rock Newman,** Spencer Promotions, and **Jason Harris,** who attacked Golota with a cellular phone.



Joyce was a leading lightweight contender

THE PUNCHLINES

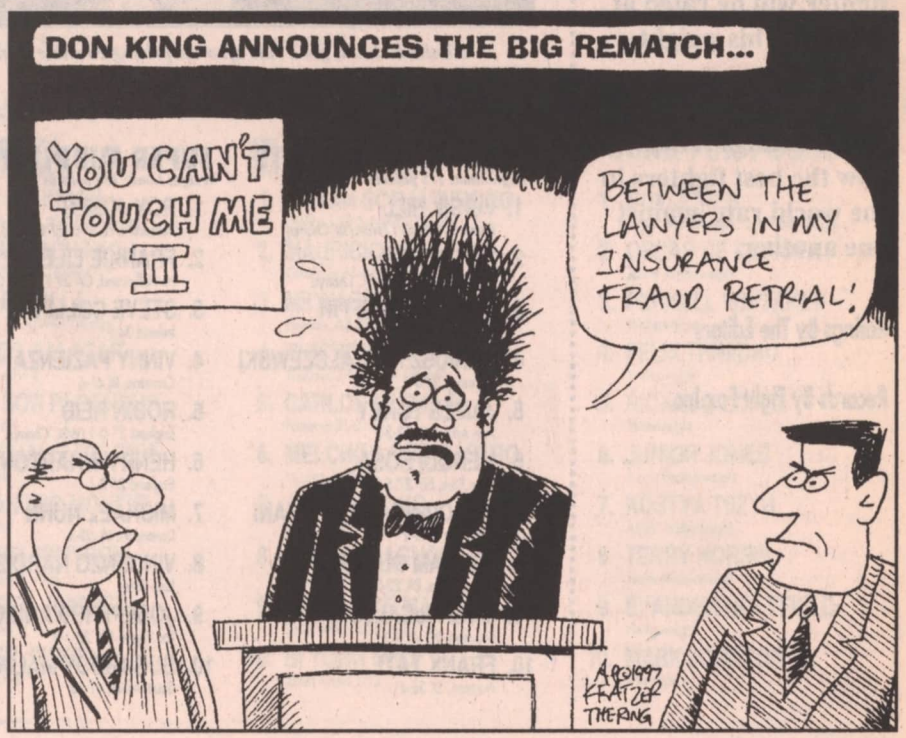
"I always liked to chase the girls. Parkinson's [syndrome] stopped all that. Now I might have a chance to go to heaven."

–Muhammad Ali, in *People*

"When McSorley gets into the ring, he'll need to bring his hockey stick with him. I don't want him to back out now that he's opened his mouth. It's not all fun and games like he thinks it is. He can even wear his helmet if he wants to—it won't help him any."

–Butterbean, on a proposed match vs. NHL tough guy Marty McSorley

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended February 5, 1997

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

Khalid Rahilou got a ride after surprising Frankie Randall

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Atlanta, GA *33-3 (WBA Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *29-1*
3. **MIKE TYSON** Southington, OH *45-2*
4. **MICHAEL MOORER** Detroit, MI *37-1 (IBF Champ)*
5. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *28-2*
6. **RAY MERCER** West Orange, NJ *24-4-1*
7. **HENRY AKINWANDE** England *31-0-1*
8. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ *26-0*
9. **RIDDICK BOWE** Fort Washington, MD *40-1*
10. **TIM WITHERSPOON** Philadelphia, PA *45-5*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **NATE MILLER** Philadelphia, PA *28-4 (WBA Champ)*
2. **ADOLPHO WASHINGTON** Lexington, KY *26-3-2 (IBF Champ)*
3. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** Argentina *21-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **FABRICE TIOZZO** France *34-1*
5. **ALEXANDER GUROV** Ukraine *18-1-1*
6. **KENNY KEENE** Emmett, ID *37-1*
7. **CARL THOMPSON** England *20-4*
8. **DAVID IZEQWIRE** Washington, D.C. *19-1*
9. **TORSTEN MAY** Germany *15-1*
10. **YOSUKEZAN NISHIJIMA** Japan *17-1*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **VIRGIL HILL** Bismarck, ND *43-1 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL *34-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL *26-0*
4. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany *32-0-1*
5. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI *53-3-2*
6. **MERQUI SOSA** New York, NY *27-5-2*
7. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI** Germany *38-3-2*
8. **WILLIAM GUTHRIE** Philadelphia, PA *22-0*
9. **MIKE McCALLUM** Brooklyn, NY *49-4-1*
10. **FRANK TATE** Houston, TX *36-4*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL *34-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **FRANKIE LILES** N. Hollywood, CA *29-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **STEVE COLLINS** Ireland *34-3*
4. **VINNY PAZIENZA** Cranston, RI *41-6*
5. **ROBIN REID** England *21-0-1 (WBC Champ)*
6. **HENRY WHARTON** England *25-2-1*
7. **MICHAEL NUNN** Davenport, IA *50-3*
8. **VINCENZO NARDIELLO** Italy *30-6*
9. **JOSEPH KIWANUKA** Las Vegas, NV *23-1-2*
10. **SUGARBOY MALINGA** South Africa *41-10*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA *30-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **KEITH HOLMES** Washington, D.C. *29-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. *23-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **LONNIE BRADLEY** New York, NY *25-0*
5. **JORGE CASTRO** Argentina *100-5-2*
6. **QUINCY TAYLOR** Dallas, TX *26-4*
7. **DANA ROSENBLATT** Malden, MA *29-1*
8. **OTIS GRANT** Canada *28-1*
9. **JOHN DAVID JACKSON** Seattle, WA *35-2*
10. **ROBERT McCRACKEN** England *28-0*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **TERRY NORRIS**
   Mission Valley, CA *45-6 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI**
   France *34-2 (WBA Champ)*
3. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ**
   Argentina *56-3*
4. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   St. Petersburg, FL *36-1*
5. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO *37-2*
6. **BRONCO McKART**
   Monroe, MI *30-2*
7. **HECTOR CAMACHO**
   Orlando, FL *63-3*
8. **RAUL MARQUEZ**
   Houston, TX *25-0*
9. **EMMETT LINTON**
   Tacoma, WA *22-2*
10. **ANTHONY STEPHENS**
    Shreveport, LA *28-7-2*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA *40-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *31-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana *33-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico *37-3-1*
5. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI *37-2*
6. **PATRICK CHARPENTIER**
   France *23-4*
7. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico *22-2-1*
8. **YORI BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico *65-2*
9. **PATRICK COLEMAN**
   Chicago, IL *25-5*
10. **JOSE LUIS NAVARRO**
    Spain *22-1*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA *23-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *18-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **KHALID RAHILOU**
   France *29-2 (WBA Champ)*
4. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico *97-2-1*
5. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *41-1*
6. **CHARLES MURRAY**
   Rochester, NY *38-3*
7. **FRANKIE RANDALL**
   Warren, OH *53-5-1*
8. **RAFAEL RUELAS**
   Studio City, CA *47-3*
9. **FRED PENDLETON**
   Miami, FL *41-21-4*
10. **SOREN SONDERGAARD**
    Denmark *29-1*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV**
   Japan *23-0 (WBA Champ)*
2. **PHILLIP HOLIDAY**
   South Africa *30-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *20-0*
4. **GEORGE SCOTT**
   Pembroke Pines, FL *30-1*
5. **JEAN-BAPTISTE MENDY**
   France *49-5-2 (WBC Champ)*
6. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *21-0*
7. **IVAN ROBINSON**
   Delran, NJ *23-1*
8. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA**
   Puerto Rico *40-4*
9. **LEAVANDER JOHNSON**
   Atlantic City, NJ *26-1-1*
10. **ARTUR GRIGORJAN**
    Uzbekistan *21-0*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **AZUMAH NELSON**
   Ghana *39-3-2 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ *24-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **GENARO HERNANDEZ**
   Los Angeles, CA *34-1-1*
4. **TRACY PATTERSON**
   Highland, NY *57-4-1*
5. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea *21-2 (WBA Champ)*
6. **GABE RUELAS**
   Arleta, CA *43-3*
7. **ROBERT GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA *27-0*
8. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France *34-0*
9. **ANATOLY ALEXANDROV**
   Kazakhstan *29-3*
10. **DJAMEL LIFA**
    France *22-1*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **TOM JOHNSON**
   Detroit, MI *45-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA**
   Philippines *40-7 (WBC Champ)*
3. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England *24-0*
4. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ**
   Puerto Rico *49-7-3 (WBA Champ)*
5. **KEVIN KELLEY**
   Flushing, NY *46-1-2*
6. **EVER BELENO**
   Colombia *34-2*
7. **WELCOME NCITA**
   South Africa *40-2*
8. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico *18-1*
9. **MANUEL MEDINA**
   Mexico *52-8*
10. **DERRICK GAINER**
    Pensacola, FL *18-4*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **JUNIOR JONES**
   Brooklyn, NY *42-2*
2. **DANIEL ZARAGOZA**
   Mexico *54-7-3 (WBC Champ)*
3. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa *31-2 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico *43-1*
5. **ANTONIO CERMENO**
   Venezuela *25-1 (WBA Champ)*
6. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV *20-1*
7. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Memphis, TN *30-2-1*
8. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico *25-0*
9. **ORLANDO CANIZALES**
   Laredo, TX *43-3-1*
10. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
    Mexico *19-0*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **MBULELO BOTILE**
   South Africa *21-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia *35-1*
3. **DAORUNG C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand *58-5-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASUK**
   Thailand *12-0 (WBC Champ)*
5. **NANA KONADU**
   Ghana *36-3*
6. **PAULIE AYALA**
   Ft. Worth, TX *19-0*
7. **ANCEE GEDEON**
   Westminster, CA *14-8-1*
8. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM**
   Thailand *5-1*
9. **ROBBIE REGAN**
   Wales *17-2-3*
10. **PASTOR MAURIN**
    Argentina *33-0*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **HIROSHI KAWASHIMA**
   Japan *20-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Abuquerque, NM *38-0-2*
3. **DANNY ROMERO**
   Abuquerque, NM *29-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand *12-0 (WBA Champ)*
5. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines *34-1-1*
6. **HYUNG CHUL LEE**
   South Korea *19-6*
7. **ALIMI GOITIA**
   Venezuela *15-1*
8. **HAROLD GREY**
   Colombia *21-2*
9. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia *23-0*
10. **POLO SAUCEDO**
    Houston, TX *12-3-1*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. *30-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **YURI ARBACHAKOV**
   Japan *23-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela *21-3 (WBA Champ)*
4. **CARLOS SALAZAR**
   Argentina *43-7-2*
5. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *26-1*
6. **CHATCHAI ELITE-GYM**
   Thailand *24-1*
7. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico *33-2*
8. **ARTHUR JOHNSON**
   East St. Louis, IL *13-3*
9. **ALBERTO JIMENEZ**
   Mexico *32-4-3*
10. **JESPER JENSEN**
    Denmark *20-0*

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand *33-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia *16-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
   Phoenix, AZ *43-3*
4. **PHICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand *17-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **CARLOS MURILLO**
   Panama *31-3*
6. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico *47-5-4*
7. **JESUS CHONG**
   Mexico *30-7*
8. **KEIJI YAMAGUCHI**
   Japan *20-2*
9. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa *44-10-2*
10. **HI YONG CHOI**
    South Korea *19-2*

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Super Middleweight/Light Heavyweight
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Welterweight
3. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Welterweight
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Welterweight
5. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Strawweight
6. **JUNIOR JONES**
   Junior Featherweight
7. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
8. **TERRY NORRIS**
   Junior Middleweight
9. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
   Heavyweight
10. **MARK JOHNSON**
    Flyweight

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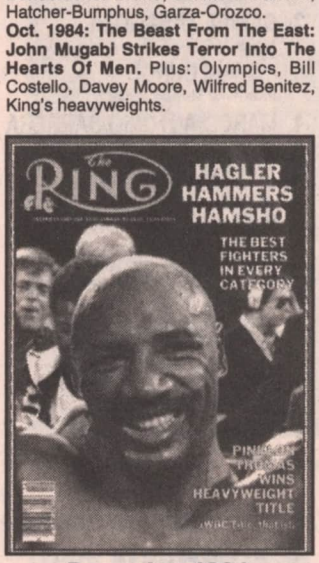

December 1984

Dec. 1984: Hagler Hammers Hamsho. Plus: Barry McGuigan, boxing's best, James Broad, Julian Jackson, Pinklon Thomas.

Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

April 1985: Special Hagler-Hearns Program. Plus: British fighters, Hector Camacho, Donald Curry, Sonny Liston.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

June 1985: Holmes' Last Hurrah? Holmes-Bey Color Action. Plus: Holmes vs. all-time greats, Paul-Arroyo, 1901.

Aug. 1985: Seven Elected To The Ring Hall Of Fame (Jose Napoles, Jake LaMotta, Panama Al Brown, Manuel Ortiz, Young Stribling, Thomas Jackling, Lord Lonsdale). Plus: Spinks-Holmes preview, Barry McGuigan.

Sept. 1985: Barry McGuigan: Can He Be Boxing's Savior? Plus: Truth Williams, Tyrell Biggs, Greg Richardson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Paul-Blake, Witherspoon-Bonecrusher, Berbick-Bey, Pinklon Thomas.

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NEW FACES

JOEL CASAMAYOR

Junior Lightweight

By Dan Hirshberg

PRO RECORD

1996		
Sept. 20	David Chamendis, Miami	KO 1
Nov. 1	Oscar Gonzalez, Coconut Grove, FL	W 4
Dec. 14	Roberto Sierra, Atlantic City	KO 1
1997		
Jan. 18	Vidal Padilla, Condado, Puerto Rico	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
4	4	0	0	3

Joel Casamayor is practically yelling into the telephone at a reporter. "I AM VERY PROUD TO BE IN AMERICA!" Casamayor, who speaks little English, is echoing the words of his trainer, Felix Pintor, who is standing nearby and trying to teach his newest protege the language of his adopted country as quickly as possible.

Casamayor, who defected from Cuba last summer, repeats each word slowly and carefully as he tries to grasp the meaning: "I LIKE THE WAY THEY TREAT ME IN AMERICA ... HELLO, AMERICA! I'M GOING TO BE THE NEXT WORLD CHAMPION."

Maybe *si*, maybe no. But there is no arguing that Casamayor is a long way from Cuba, where world champions come only in the form of amateurs; where a championship fight lasts no longer than three rounds; where being a fighter affords you a few perks, but not many more than the guy who cleans the streets; where you fight not so much for yourself, but for Fidel Castro and a Communist system that has plunged the country into poverty; where freedom is a dirty word.

Casamayor, a 1992 Olympic gold medalist who was expected to win another gold (at 126 pounds) in Atlanta at the '96 Games, no longer wanted to fight for Cuba and Castro. Freedom, he decided, and the chance to make real money, was for him. So last June, just days after teammate Ramon Garbey had already left the team's Olympic training base in Mexico, the world-class amateur went out for a walk and never looked back.

"I was never scared," he is now saying through an interpreter. "I had a plan." The plan took him to an acquaintance who helped Casamayor and light heavyweight Garbey, another gold medal favorite, make their way to Tijuana. That's where they met Top Rank boss Bob Arum, who promptly signed each fighter to a six-year contract and moved them to Las Vegas. But Team Freedom, a group of talented Cuban boxing defectors led by manager Luis DeCubas, intervened. Despite a wining and dining effort by Top Rank, Casamayor and Garbey joined DeCubas in Miami, where they are currently based. DeCubas phoned Dino Duva of Main Events, and soon after, the duo signed second contracts. A legal battle ensued, with each party (Top Rank and Main Events) accusing the other of improprieties. An out-of-court settlement was reached in

(Continued on page 53)

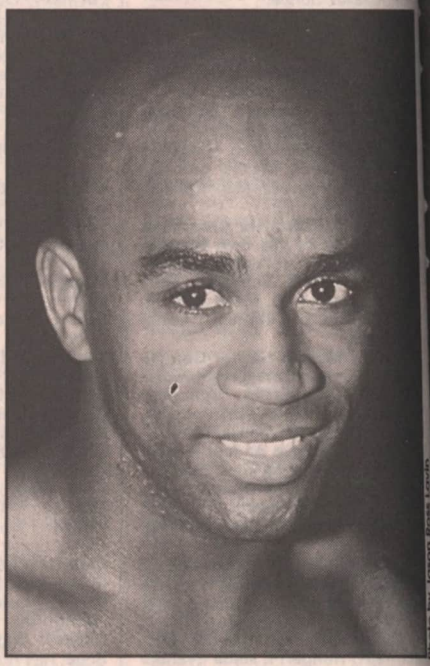
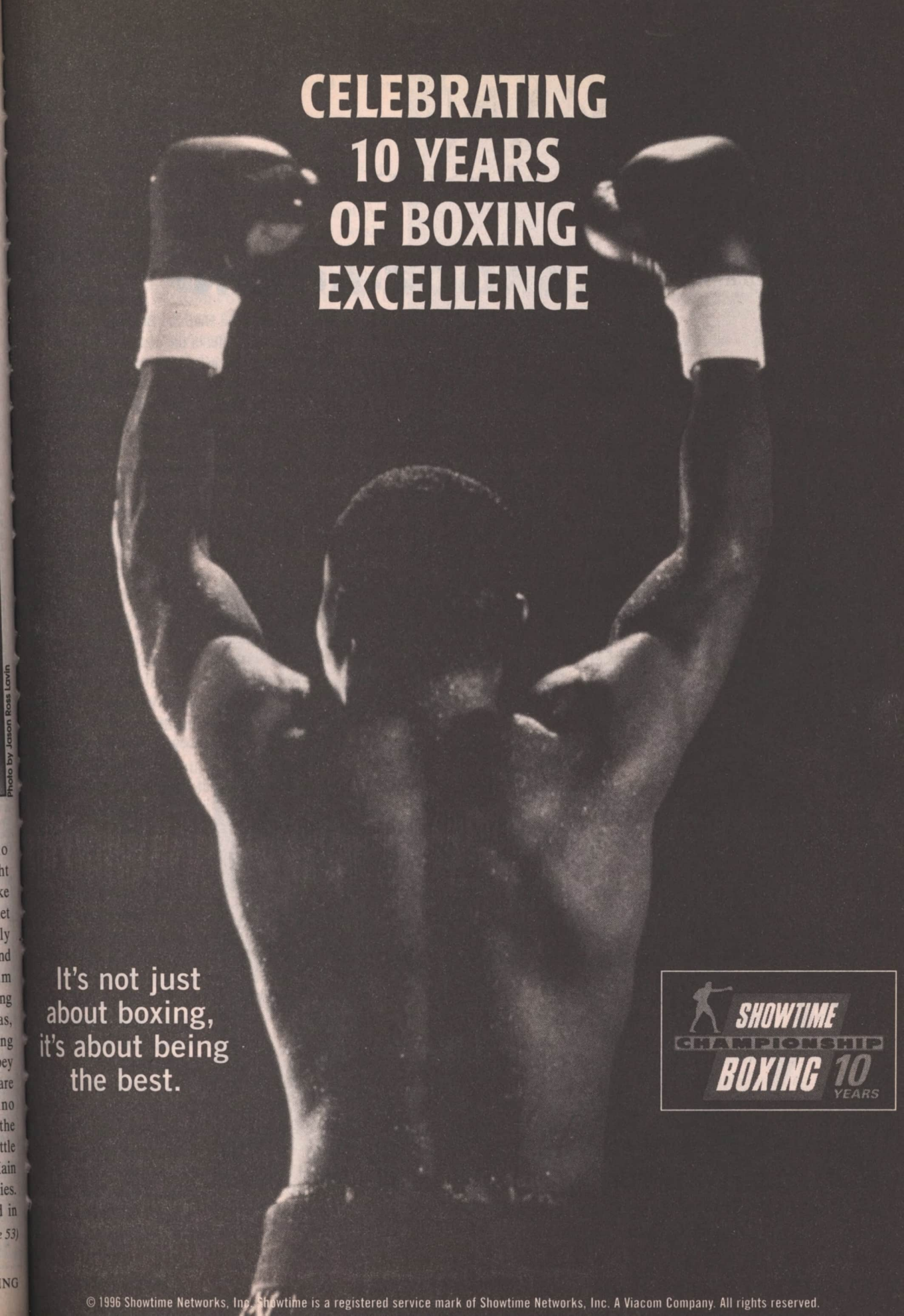


Photo by Jason Love Lewis

Joel Casamayor



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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

ZARAGOZ-AGAIN

For me, the knuckleheaded decision to put Phil Niekro in the National Baseball Hall of Fame was as difficult to grasp as one of the old man's knuckleballs in the dirt. My preference has always been to reward true greats—even short-term greats—rather than the steady but unspectacular guys who stick around long enough to compile big numbers. I'll take the seven seasons Ron Guidry was at his best over Don Sutton's 324 wins. Give me Tony Oliva's three batting titles and eight All-Star Games in the only eight years he was healthy and keep Paul Molitor's 3,000 mostly forgettable hits in two decades.

My criteria for acceptance into any sport's hallowed Hall can be summed up in two words: Dominate, dammit!

It's a position from which your stubborn columnist doesn't like to waver, but about a week after Cooperstown was told to clear some new wall space for the guy with the funny flutterball, a few doubts did start creeping into my mind. It wasn't memories of Niekro's best knucklers that had me rethinking my inflexible stance. It was the curveball Daniel Zaragoza threw at all the experts who predicted he'd fall to undefeated Wayne McCullough in a WBC super bantamweight title defense in January.

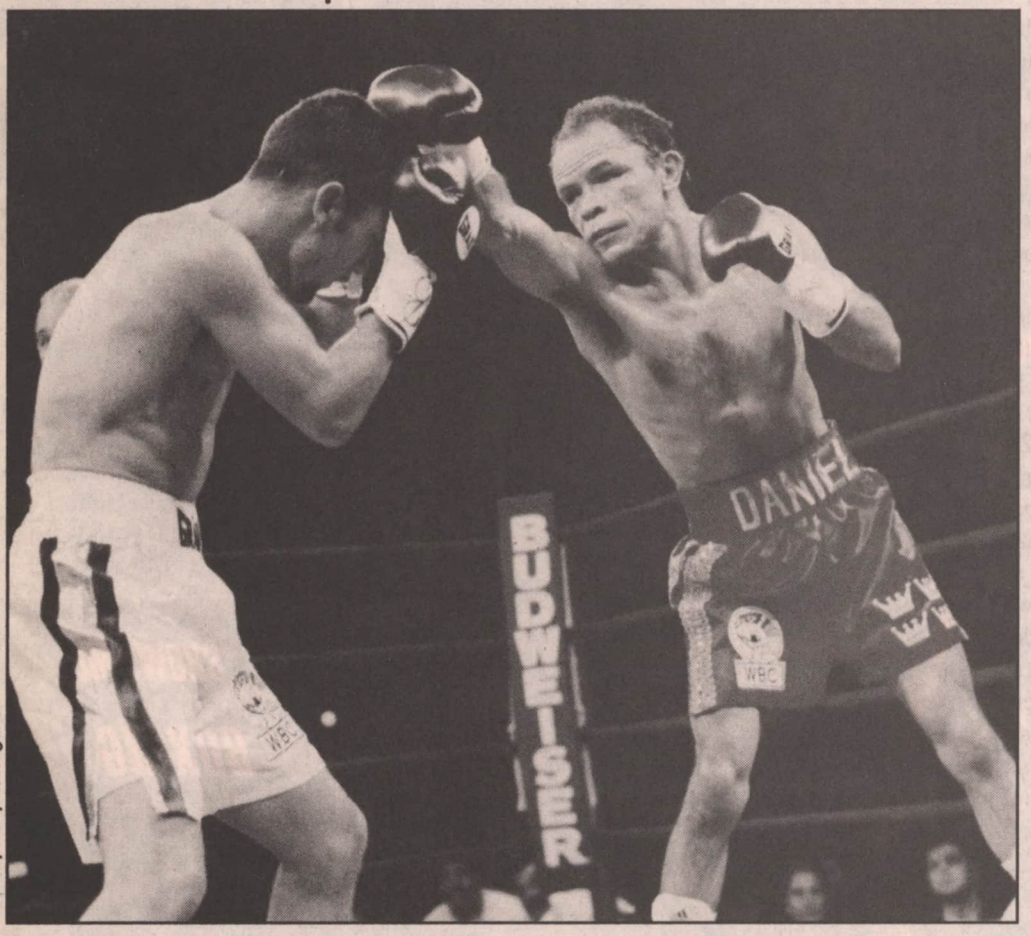


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

According to the script, Mexico's Daniel Zaragoza, the old man of the lighter weights, was supposed to wilt under the intense pressure of Wayne McCullough. But WBC super bantamweight champion Zaragoza controlled the pace—at least until the last two rounds—and won a well-received 12-round decision.

Zaragoza is boxing's version of Niekro, with one exception: The Mexican doesn't grip the stitches, he wears them. He wins by throwing junk, rarely overpowering anyone, just keeping the guy who is trying to hit him forever off-balance. Against McCullough, Zaragoza was even forced to hang on in the end as his rival swung from the heels and blasted some fly balls to the warning track in the last two innings.

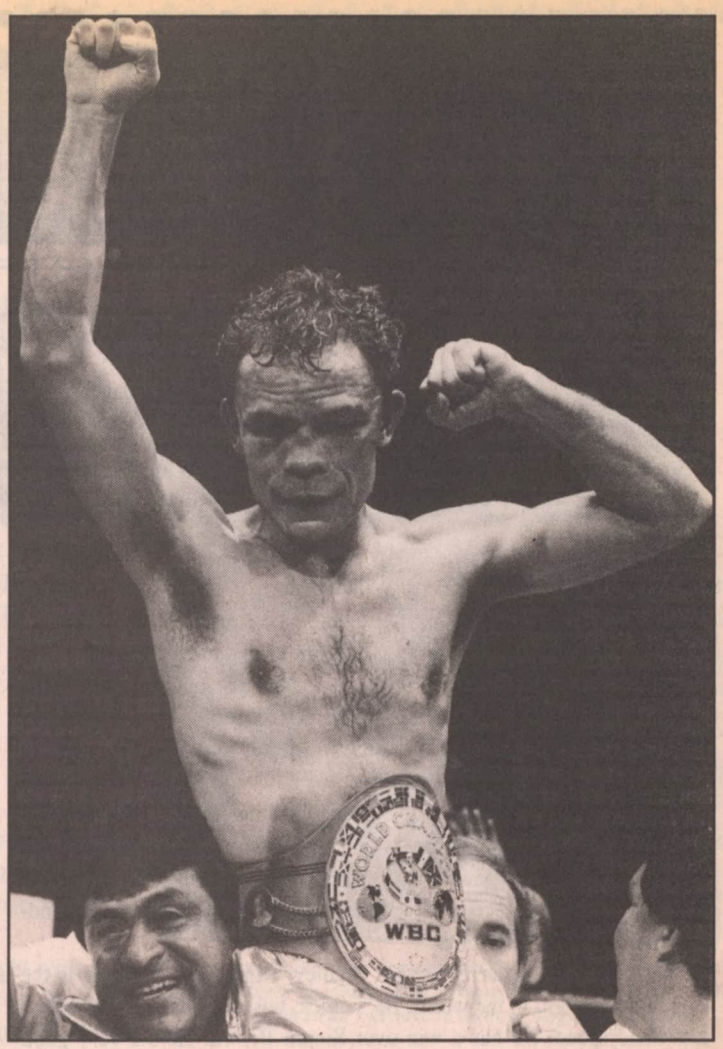
Zaragoza's wins are like radical feminists: Can you ever recall a pretty one? He doesn't overwhelm anybody and has never beaten a true great. (The Carlos Zarate he stopped in 1988 was almost 37 years old.) Zaragoza lost

the bantamweight title in his first defense; he has some bad setbacks on his dossier (L 12 Thierry Jacob—*ugh!*); and he has never competed for a belt that wasn't adorned with the logo of his hombres, the WBC.

He doesn't hit nearly as hard as Larry Merchant when the HBO mike man is dispatching an intruder from his interview space, yet Zaragoza isn't a smooth enough technician to win on brains alone. So he often relies on a hybrid style and a battle plan devised on the fly. The southpaw smokes five cigarettes a day between bouts, and has skin that shreds like lettuce in a Cuisinart. (Quentin Tarantino movies don't have as much blood as Zaragoza's fights.) Against McCullough, Zaragoza even bled from the scalp. If his mug ever survived a bout unmarked, he'd probably manage to get cut by a bodypunch.

Greatness? Dominance? A champion fighters fear facing? Hardly. But when you look at Zaragoza's career numbers and take into account all the intangibles, it's hard not to convince yourself that he deserves to be immortalized one day in Canastota. And if your head can't reach that conclusion, then watch him, at age 39, outgut a 26-year-old McCullough on the challenger-friendly turf of Boston, and your heart just might.

The fight was Zaragoza's 20th world title bout, the most of any active fighter. Remarkably, he has fought none of them—that's zero—in his homeland. The ultimate road warrior has faced South Koreans in South Korea, Japanese in Japan, Californians at the Great Western Forum, an Italian in Italy, a Frenchman in France, an Upstate New Yorker in Upstate New York, and a Northern Irishman in heavily Irish Beantown. Zaragoza has reigned as a 122-pound titlist three times, making 10 successful defenses. In one of his title-winning bouts (vs. Paul Banke), he avenged a knockout loss, one of the toughest things to do in the game.



Before you label Zaragoza a favorite of the WBC, consider that none of his 20 world title fights has been held in his native Mexico. At 39, the junior featherweight king is the oldest reigning champion in boxing.

I remember thinking that the second of his three shootouts with Banke, a battle that ended with Zaragoza bloodied, dropped, and stopped, had finished the old guy as a serious threat to the division's top competition. To put it bluntly, he looked shot. That was seven years ago. Since then, Zaragoza has gone 14-2-2, winning, losing, and winning the belt again.

Through the years, it has been virtually impossible for anyone to talk or write about Zaragoza without making reference to his face. Scarred and rutted, it's a face that tells more boxing tales than a scrapbook full of yellowed newspaper clippings. Ironically, though, it is a visage that inside the ropes reveals nothing. Though McCullough often looked frustrated and befuddled, Zaragoza never appeared rattled, not even when he was being bulled into the ropes or listening to his rival's fans singing, chanting, and roaring with every move their hero made.

Sixteen years into his career, when a lighter-weight fighter shouldn't be able to beat even a statue to the punch, Zaragoza landed first throughout much of the bout. According to the punch stats, he threw 1,117 blows, about what some heavyweights unleash in a year. At an age when he should have been going through a midlife crisis, the Mexican instead gave his younger, stronger opponent a mid-*fight* crisis. And talk about having the right fighter's attitude. Afterward, despite having won a contest he was supposed to lose, Zaragoza still felt compelled to apologize to his cornermen for his sloppy finish.

Make no mistake about it, Zaragoza-McCullough wasn't HBO's attempt to introduce everyone to a long-overlooked veteran with an interesting resume. Zaragoza speaks no English, doesn't possess a knockout punch, and has for years been considered one more decisive defeat away from oblivion. No, this bout was supposed to be a *Boxing After Dark* coming-out party for McCullough, a new face and entertaining performer the cable giant hoped could be another Arturo Gatti.

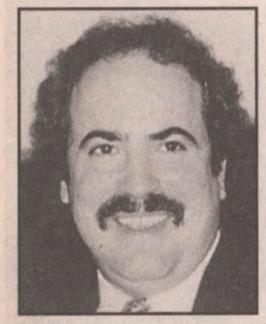
The lesson learned: Nothing is certain when Zaragoza fights, except uncertainty. Do you want to be the one to make the seemingly logical case that the 12 rough rounds with McCullough most likely pushed the champion's body past the breaking point, took away what edge he had left, and probably assured that his 21st title fight will be his last? No? Me neither.

The next challenger has to hope that Father Time *finally* catches up to old man Zaragoza and robs him of his second wind. Either that or hope that during his time off between fights, the champ with the paltry quarter-of-a-pack-a-day habit gets as serious about smoking butts as he is about kicking them. ■

THE RING'S QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

Compiled by Thad Moore

Q: WHO IS THE BEST OF THE CURRENT CROP OF MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPIONS?

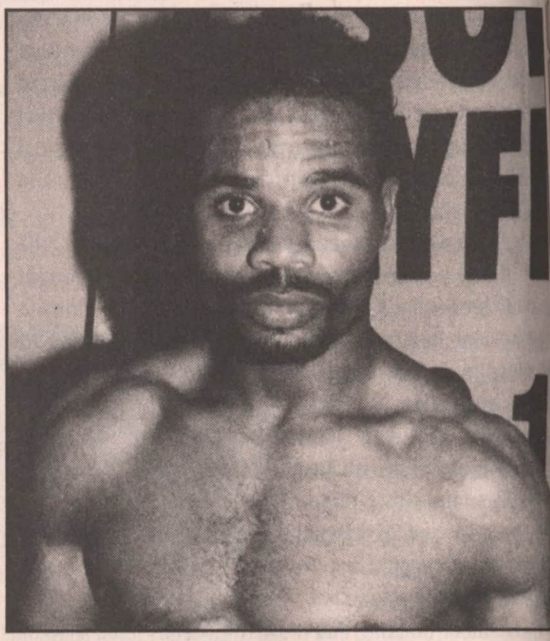


Mike Acri, promoter and matchmaker: "William Joppy is the best of the champions. What I like about him is that he throws combinations and stays busy. He went on the road to Japan and won the title. He's always active. Joppy is the best *boxer* of the champions, and he continues to improve.

"Bernard Hopkins doesn't fight enough. He never fights. Hopkins' strengths are combination-punching and conditioning. Hopkins will probably move up in weight soon. Since he never fights, I would make him the second-best middleweight champion.

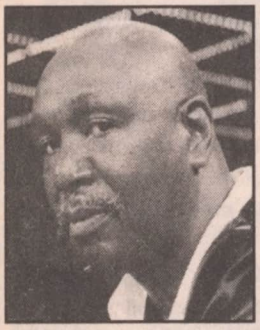
"The best contender is Lonnie Bradley. Right now, Bradley is the best middleweight in the world. He's quick, tall, can box, and has excellent hand speed. He has a win over Simon Brown. He's a very good boxer, the most talented of the middleweights. Dana Rosenblatt, despite having lost to Vinny Pazienza, is underrated. People dismiss him because of the color of his skin. He has a good jab and is a strong fighter.

"Joppy and Bradley are the two best middleweights in the world. A bout featuring these two would be the best fight you could make in the division."



Promoter/matchmaker Mike Acri is high on WBA middleweight champion William Joppy. The middleweight division is relatively faceless, and the unbeaten Joppy will have to score several impressive wins to garner widespread respect.

Q: IS JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ FINISHED?



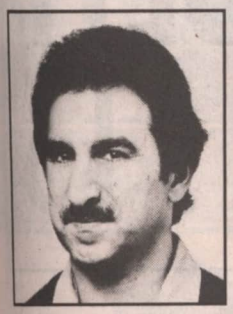
Don Turner, trainer: "Every fast guy that he ever fought made Chavez quit. Frankie Randall did it. All Chavez did when he fought was impose his will on people. Everybody thought he was unbeatable. The public thought he was great. The media gave him great press. Meldrick Taylor had him beat and he couldn't crack an egg. Pernell Whitaker had him beat and he couldn't punch either. Could you imagine what Aaron Pryor would have done to Chavez?

"Chavez was overrated. Anybody who was good made him run back to Mexico. He was basically a junior lightweight or featherweight. He moved up in weight to make more money. He was nothing special. He had a good run and was well-matched and well-promoted. He got a few breaks in his career against Whitaker and Taylor. He was a good fighter, but never outstanding.

"With all of Chavez' fights, look at the guys he fought. Guys know how to fight him now. They are not afraid of him anymore. Oscar De La Hoya took him apart. Now Chavez is just going to become a steppingstone. He doesn't live right. When you impose your will on him, he becomes just another fighter. He was a good fighter in his prime, but was never anything special."

What do boxing's insiders think of the hot issues? Each month, we'll come up with four or five questions, then grill the experts. If there's a topic you'd like examined, send your question to The Ring, Questions Of The Month, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034

Q: HAS MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA BEEN EXPOSED AS SOMETHING LESS THAN A GREAT FIGHTER? WILL HE BE ABLE TO REBOUND FROM DEFEAT?



John Beyrooty, publicist for Forum Boxing (Barrera's promoter): "Barrera has always made for great fights. He was on his way to becoming a great fighter. Maybe he was thinking he couldn't lose. But he wasn't invincible. It wasn't like he was 75-0. You never know for sure how someone will rebound from his first loss.

"Even though the judges had Barrera ahead against Jones, most Mexicans start slowly. Because the referee didn't stop the fight, there was no clear result. Nobody knows what might have happened. There was enough confusion to warrant another fight. That is probably enough motivation for Barrera to come back.

Photo by Andy Lyons/Allsport

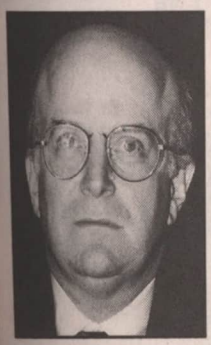
Can Marco Antonio Barrera rebound from his disastrous loss to Junior Jones? According to Forum Boxing publicist John Beyrooty, the Mexican will have to improve his porous defense.

"Barrera has fought some tough guys. Except for his fight with Jesse Benavides, he's had to grind out his wins by wearing you down. He doesn't win fights like Ray Leonard did, by winning easy shutouts. Barrera has always been able to be hit, but less so than most Mexican fighters. Against Jones, he got hit with a great shot.

"Barrera is susceptible to right hands. He also gets hit a lot; his defense is not very good. But he also does a lot of things well. He throws hard bodypunches, has a good left hook, is very dedicated, has excellent conditioning, and always makes for crowd-pleasing fights.

"I think Barrera will want to come back stronger than ever after the Jones loss. We'll find out if he has the determination. I think he definitely can come back."

Q: IS IT HEALTHY FOR BOXING TO HAVE A SINGLE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION WHO IS PERCEIVED AS UNBEATABLE?



Shelly Finkel, manager: "I think it's best to have one great champion and four or five great fights on the horizon. Whoever wins the Holyfield-Tyson rematch could fight a number of different guys. You would like to see the Riddick Bowe of two years ago, Michael Moorer, or Lennox Lewis. This is good for boxing.

"It is better when the public perceives the fighters and fights as being competitive. I think there is the opportunity for the division to be very competitive now. The division was bad before Holyfield beat Tyson. The public was tired of all the mismatches, especially after the [Bruce] Seldon fight. If Holyfield had been knocked out early, the public would have turned on boxing.

"Against Holyfield, Tyson was one-dimensional. You don't know if Holyfield can get up again, to be able to do it again. The rematch will be a toss-up fight. The division right now is very exciting. And as the heavyweight division goes, so goes boxing. The public loves heavyweights, and the division as it is now has generated more interest."

100 YEARS LATER

REMEMBERING FITZSIMMONS-CORBETT A FIGHT OF FIRSTS

By Steve Nicolaisen

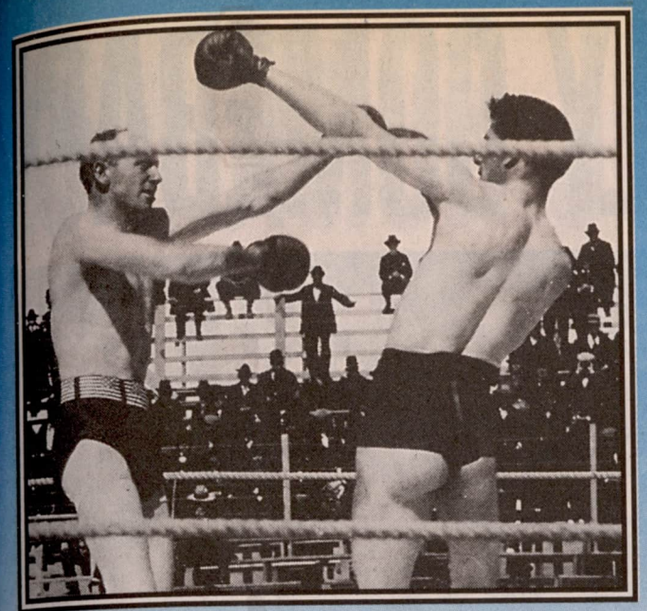
Decades before the likes of Ali, Leonard, Hagler, Hearns, Chavez, and Tyson fought in Nevada rings erected in casino parking lots, fighters named Gans, Nelson, Attell, and Johnson battled in the wind and dust of open-air arenas or in the back-rooms of saloons reeking of cigars and rotgut. Many of these bouts were held in Reno, not yet the Biggest Little City in the World, while others took place in mining boom towns like Goldfield and Tonopah.

Still, for boxing's actual birthdate in the Silver State, one has to go all the way back to 1897, to Nevada's capital of Carson City.

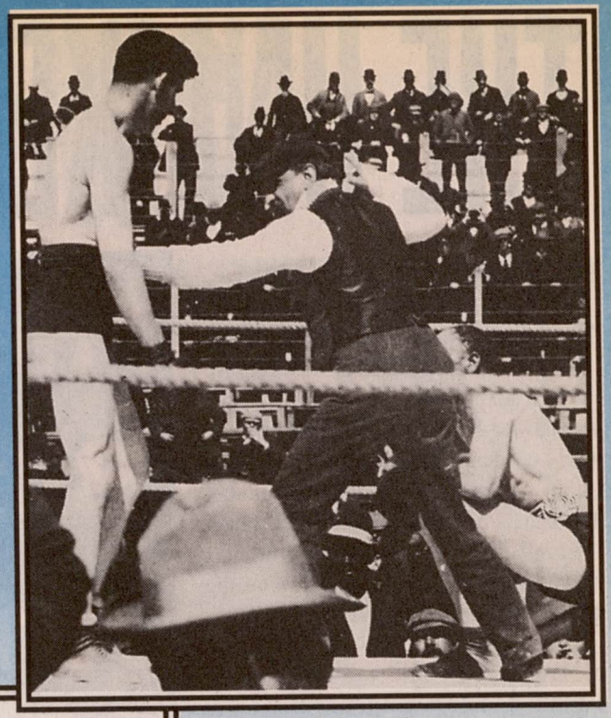
Granted entrance as the 36th state in 1864, Nevada initially drew little attention. Most Americans saw Nevada as an expanse of desert with little or no value or interest except to cattle ranchers and miners. Even at that, the former had to battle a hostile environment to eke out an existence, while the latter, after several decades of success, had virtually depleted the silver from the Comstock Lode. By the 1890s, boom towns like Virginia City, where a young Missourian named Samuel Clemens had earlier begun a literary career that would have the world know him as Mark Twain, were barely hanging on.

If not for three men, Nevada might never have burst into the boxing world. The first was James J. Corbett, then heavyweight champion of the world. The second was Bob Fitzsimmons, then middleweight champion. The third was a gambler named Dan Stuart, who wanted more than anything to match the two in a title fight.

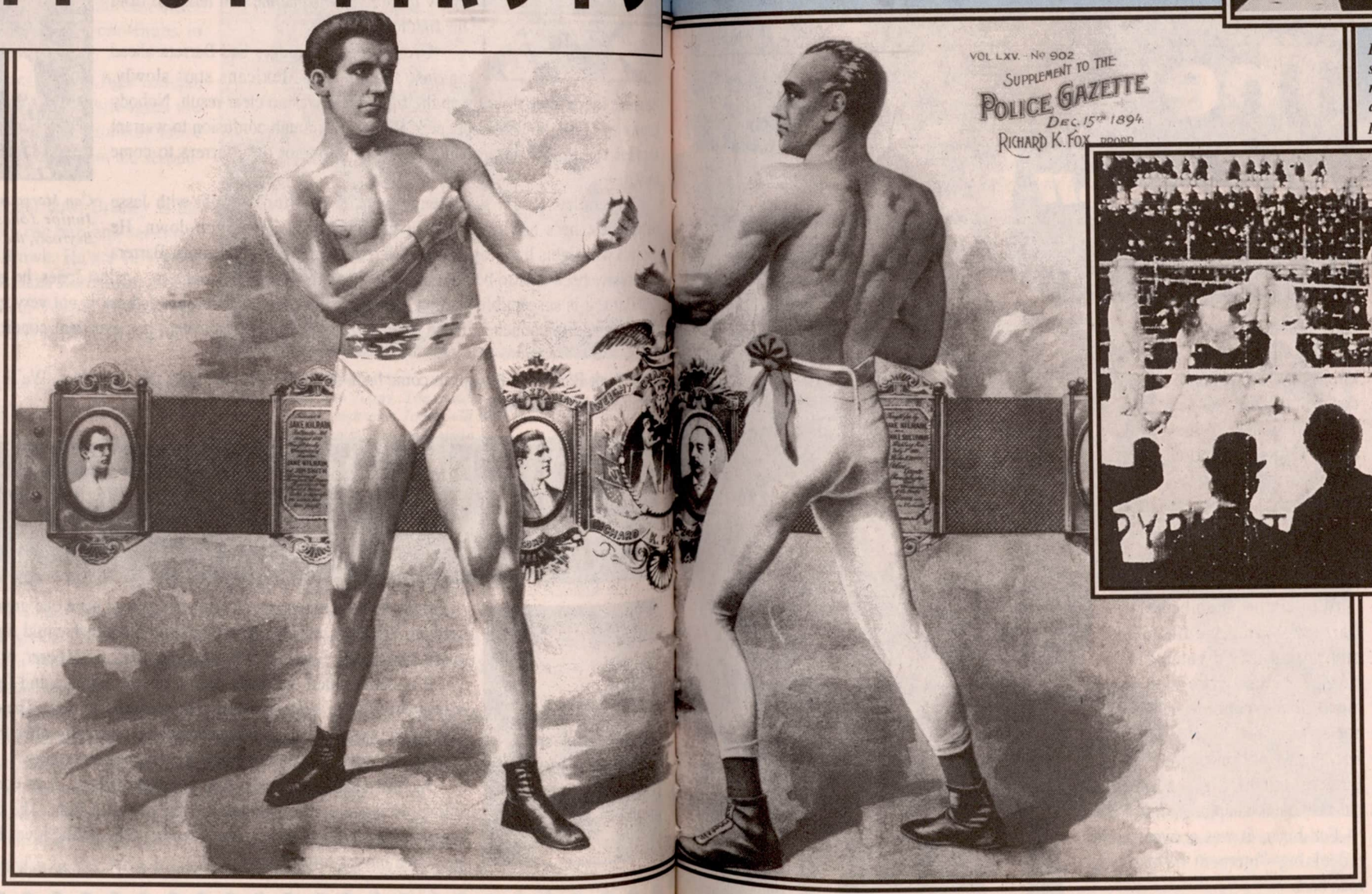
(Continued on page 53)

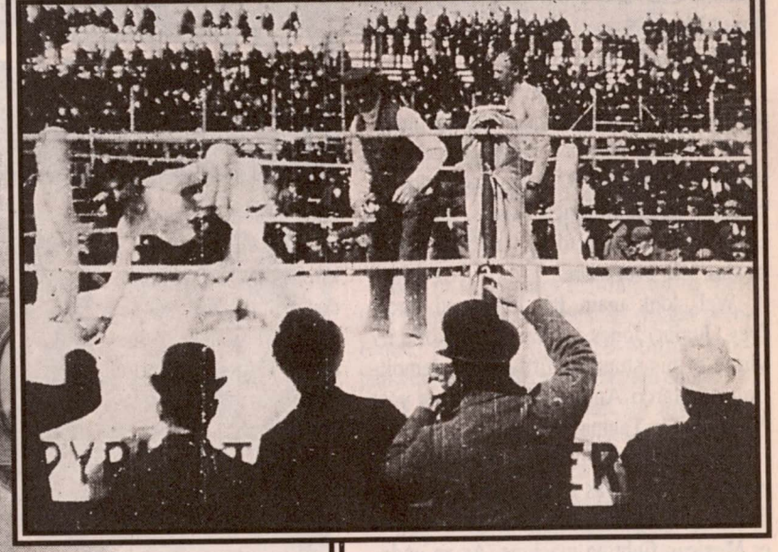


In the first boxing match held in Nevada, Bob Fitzsimmons (left) challenges James J. Corbett for the heavyweight title on St. Patrick's Day, 1897.



If Corbett thought Fitz was finished after this sixth-round knockdown (above), he was sadly mistaken. The challenger rose from the canvas and, eight rounds later, kayoed Corbett with a punch to the solar plexus (below).





THE UNLIKELY COMEBACK OF JUNIOR JONES

By Phil Berger

"He's Tasted The Bitter And The Sweet"

Photo by Andy Lyons/Allsport

In early-1994, Junior Jones, then WBA bantamweight champion, was regarded as a boxing phenomenon. At 5'8", he was tall for his weight class, yet he managed to combine the cunning of a ring tactician with a skinny man's big punch. Through 32 bouts, he was undefeated, having scored 22 knockouts. Boxing insiders ranked the Brooklyn native among the game's best pound-for-pound fighters.

Then, on April 22, in his second title defense, Jones' world went topsy turvy. Fighting against John Michael Johnson in Las Vegas, Jones was knocked out in 11 rounds.

Two fights later, in October 1994, against unranked Darryl Pinckney in Atlantic City, Jones suffered an even more shocking knockout, falling in the third round of a scheduled 10-rounder.

To most observers, Jones' career seemed kaput. Over. Done. Forget about it.

The fighter who had exhibited such ring mastery in his first 32 bouts had suddenly become target practice. Jones, 24 at the time, didn't figure to be celebrated as a boxing VIP ever more.

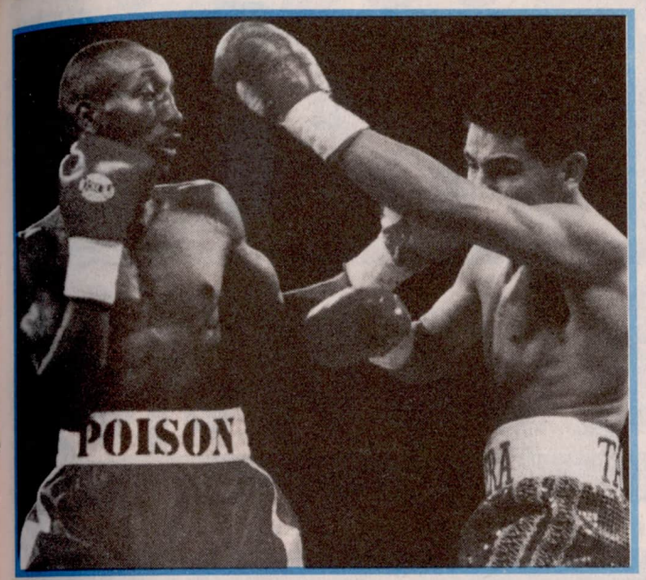
Well, look again. It's 1997, and here's Ivey (Junior) Jones, on top of the world by virtue of his stunning fifth-round demolition of Marco Antonio Barrera this past November in Tampa.

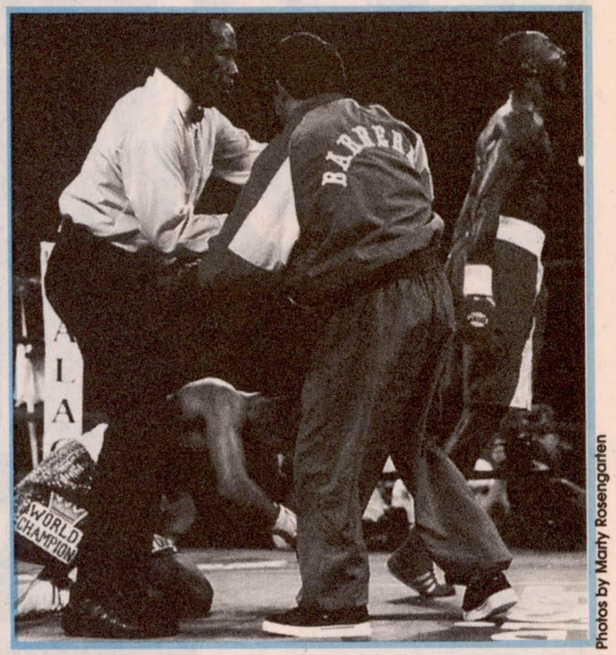
Barrera, you remember, was the HBO pinup boy who was thought to be the second coming of Julio Cesar Chavez—another Mexican fighting machine. As an undefeated pound-for-pound entrant, Barrera came into the match against Jones an overwhelming favorite, and few figured the former titlist would even be competitive against this unrelenting fighter.

During the bout, as HBO commentators inveighed against Jones' trading punches with Barrera, the New Yorker resisted conventional wisdom that he should execute a stick-and-move strategy. Instead, Jones consistently stood in front of Barrera, even backing him up, and beat him to the punch. When he knocked the Mexican down in the fifth round with still another of the many rights he landed that night, Barrera's cornermen rushed into the ring, prompting the referee, Max Parker Jr., to disqualify Barrera.

While the members of Barrera's camp would later protest that they'd entered the ring after the bell ended the round, Jones' performance could not be tarnished by controversy. For he had not only stood up to Barrera, but he'd given him an old-fashioned whupping.

For Jones, it was a sweet—and redeeming—moment on the long road back.





Photos by Marty Rosengarten

After tearing through Barrera with powerpunches (above), Jones celebrated while his stunned opponent sought to regain his feet (right). As quickly as you can say fifth-round win, Jones replaced Barrera in the pound-for-pound ratings.

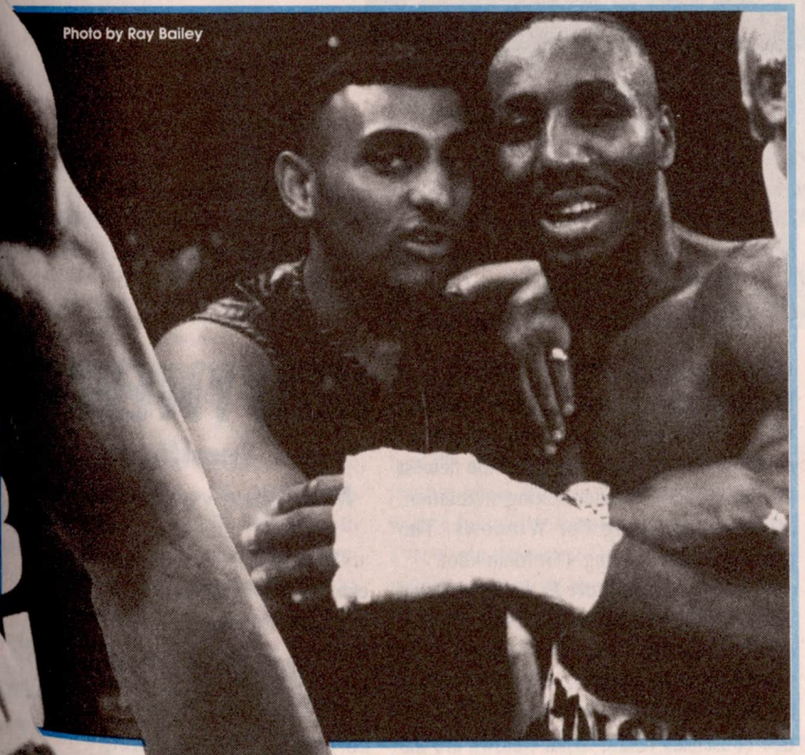


Photo by Ray Bailey

Jones celebrates his victory with an interested observer, featherweight Naseem Hamed. Jones wants big fights and only big fights, so "The Prince" just might figure in his future.

***

Roll back to April 1994: Jones vs. John Michael Johnson.

Jones had fought Johnson earlier, in the third bout of his career, and beaten him. Figured to do it again.

But in the weeks leading up to their title fight, Jones experienced weight problems. Making the 118-pound bantamweight limit became a severe chore.

"I'd wear a plastic suit for my workouts," Jones recalled, "and eat just salad and water. But the week before the bout I was still six pounds overweight. My trainer, Joey Fariello, told me, 'Don't worry.' But as we got closer and closer to the fight, I was still struggling with weight. And even though I got to 118 on the day of the fight, mentally I didn't feel that good. And I felt weak."

The weight problem was compounded by the Las Vegas heat, which Jones said was more than 100 degrees at the opening bell. As his manager, Los Angeles lawyer Gary Gittelsohn, recalled, "Junior completely dominated Johnson in the early

(Continued on page 56)

THE RING UNIFIES THE TITLES

Our Computer Does What The Alphabet Boys Won't

First of two parts

By Jim Trunzo

"Once upon a time ... there were wondrous heroes who traveled through the lands, conquering all adversaries who challenged their supremacy. Each of these heroes was adorned with the title Undisputed Champion. But there came into being powerful wizards, malevolent forces bred from political trickery and man's eternal vices—greed and envy. These self-serving beings conjured pseudo-heroes who refused to face their true counterparts. With time, so many lesser heroes existed that the Undisputed Champions could no longer be recognized by the masses. And ultimately, the Undisputed Champion ceased to exist."

If this were really a fairy tale, a happy ending would be forthcoming. However, the semi-parable above unfortunately applies to the very real state of today's boxing scene. With the Sweet Science having swelled from eight classic divisions to an obscene 17 (can't forget the strawweights), there are now 51 possible champions, even if we recognize only the WBA, IBF, and WBC. Most fans can't identify the heavyweight titlists, much less the flyweight kings. ("Let's see, there's, *um,* Holyfield ... And Bowe ... Oh, he's not a champ? Okay, then, *ah,* that English guy ... " You get the idea.

Realistically, there's a better chance of Don King getting a crewcut than there is of boxing rectifying its self-made mess. That being the case, THE RING has decided to enlist the aid of Jim Trunzo and the newest version of his computer boxing simulation, APBA Pro Boxing For Windows. The goal: to unravel boxing's Gordian knot.

THE RING Editor Steve Farhood presented Trunzo with two parings in each of 16 divisions. (Okay, we *did* forget the strawweights.) Each 12-round bout was fought 100 times in order to arrive at a bias-free consensus result. What follows are the fruits of this Herculean effort, and the reemergence of that rarest of creatures—the Undisputed Champion. One can only dream.

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Semifinals:

Mike Tyson vs. Michael Moorer

For two rounds, Moorer's southpaw style confuses Tyson, and the underdog controls the fight. Late in the third, a jolting right uppercut followed by a hard left deposits Moorer on the canvas. He survives the round, but for all intents and purposes, the fight's over. In the fourth, Tyson corners a fleeing Moorer, who has no choice but to fight back. Moorer's best shots can't slow Tyson's assault, and "Iron Mike" drives his foe to the canvas with a

The Holyfield loss aside, Tyson remains among the most dangerous heavyweights in the world (above). Golota is big and strong, and as former champ Riddick Bowe well knows, when the Polish contender remembers to punch above the belt, he possesses kayo power (right).

wicked four-punch combination. Moorer makes no effort to beat the count. Tyson by kayo in round four.

Semifinals:
Evander Holyfield vs. Andrew Golota

Holyfield's early attempts to keep Golota on the end of his jab and tie him up inside meet with little success. Thusly, he has little choice but to go to war, which suits Golota just fine. Golota works behind a stiff jab and in the third stuns Holyfield with an overhand right. Holyfield starts to fade in the seventh. However, Golota lands a low blow and "The Real Deal" receives a breather. Holyfield rebounds in the eighth and wins the round big, although he can't drop Golota. In the ninth, Golota rocks the champion, and a barrage of punches puts Holyfield on the canvas. He rises, only to be floored again. Holyfield beats the count, but the referee nonetheless steps in. Golota by TKO in round nine.

Championship Match:
Mike Tyson vs. Andrew Golota

Both heavyweights come out cautiously. Golota edges ahead by establishing his jab and smothering Tyson inside. Golota coolly weathers Tyson's second-round assault, and while it's obviously the former champion's round, Golota lands several heavy punches in the final seconds. Tyson is jolted by a hard jab and a big right in the fourth. With a minute gone, Golota stuns his opponent with a beautiful counter right, knocking Tyson into the ropes. Golota swarms effectively, prompting the referee to issue a standing eight-count. Tyson tries to fight back; he connects with a big hook that Golota shrugs off. Golota lands two thudding bodyshots, a right uppercut, and a left to the head. Tyson pitches forward onto the mat. The best he can do is roll over on his back. Golota by kayo in round four. **Undisputed Champion: Andrew Golota.**

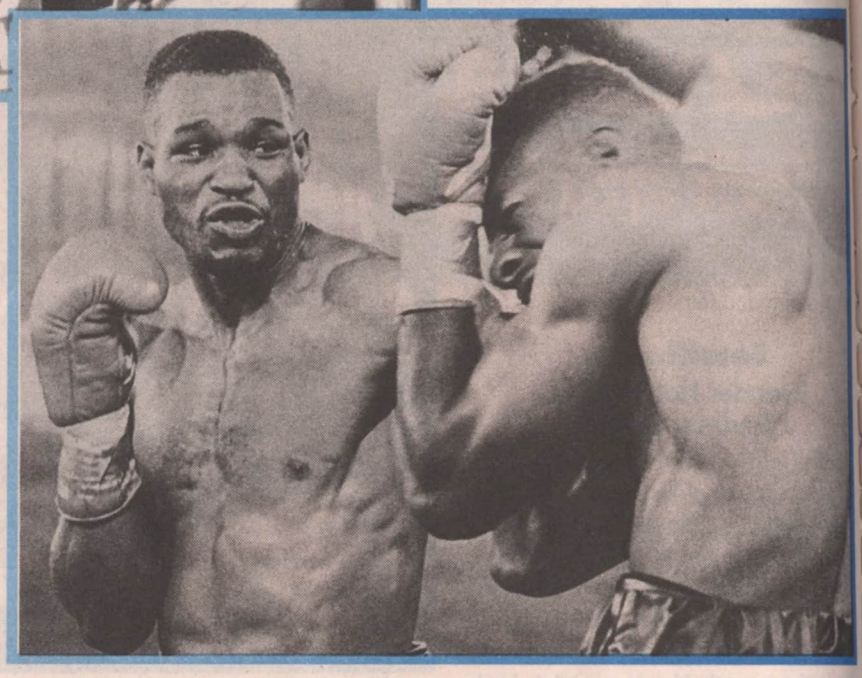
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Semifinals:
Virgil Hill vs. James Toney

Hill negotiates the early rounds from long range, but Toney shows excellent hand speed and competes evenly outside while dominating inside. The pace is lethargic through seven rounds. Toney begins to break through with ripping bodyshots in the eighth. He continues his good work in the ninth, staggering Hill late in the round. Hill runs in the 10th and 11th, and Toney follows him around the ring. In the 12th, Toney hurts Hill with a short uppercut. The fight goes to the cards. Scoring: 115-113 Toney, 116-112 Hill, and 118-115 Toney. Toney by split decision.

Semifinals:
Montell Griffin vs. Roy Jones

A hard Griffin right midway through the opening stanza incites a flurry of punches from Jones. The end result: Griffin is dropped. More stunned than hurt, he evades Jones and survives. Jones is patient in the second, and Griffin manages to score with several solid shots. Jones counters with combinations before landing a four-punch volley with a minute gone in the third. Griffin falls back into the far ropes. A blistering combination again



No one's quite sure just how good Lonnie Bradley is. But as he proved in defeating Simon Brown (above), the New Yorker rates among the best middleweights in the world. The fighter generally considered to be number one at 160 pounds, Bernard Hopkins, put on a powerplay vs. the steel-chinned Bo James (right).

drops him. Up at the count of nine, he can't stop Jones' onslaught. The referee steps in, ending the fight at the 1:47 mark. Jones by TKO in round three.

Championship Match:
James Toney vs. Roy Jones

After an uneventful first round, Toney shocks both Jones and the crowd by staggering his opponent in the second. Toney boxes beautifully in the third and fourth. Jones rebounds, driving Toney into the ropes with head and body blows in the fifth. Jones takes the sixth easily, but Toney fights back in the seventh and eighth. In the ninth, Toney begins to tire; Jones starts beating him to the punch and countering effectively. Late in the round, Jones catches his rival high on the head, knocking him down. Jones batters Toney in the 10th. Both fighters take off the 11th. Toney comes out quickly in the final stanza, but Jones hurts him again mid-round and the referee is on the verge of stopping the fight when time runs out. The decision: 115-113 Jones (twice) and 116-113 Jones. Jones by unanimous decision.

Undisputed Champion: Roy Jones.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Semifinals:
William Joppy vs. Lonnie Bradley

This figures to be a tactical fight, and neither Joppy nor Bradley disappoints by being aggressive. The rounds monotonously grind on. At the end of eight, both fighters have had their moments, but neither has done enough to hold a decided edge. Joppy scores with several powerpunches in the ninth, but Bradley outjabs him three to one. Bradley begins to score with more frequency in the 10th and 11th. Joppy takes the 12th when he buckles Bradley's knees with a right. The cards: 115-11[illegible] Bradley, 115-115, and 115-112 Bradley. Bradley by majority decision.

Semifinals:
Keith Holmes vs. Bernard Hopkins

After probing with tentative jabs, Holmes, a southpaw, decides to challenge Hopkins and promptly gets thumped with three hard shots. Holmes gets on his bicycle and fights at long range. Hopkins allows the bout to become a test of boxing skills and wins the next three rounds handily. Holmes, bleeding from a small cut on the bridge of his nose, tries to load up on his punches. He meets with some success in the sixth, but in the seventh, an exchange of blows leaves him wobbly, and Hopkins drives him to the canvas with a whistling left. Holmes rises at four, but Hopkins rains punches on him and the referee pulls "The Executioner" off, ending the fight. Hopkins by TKO in round seven.

Championship Match:
Lonnie Bradley vs. Bernard Hopkins

Moving and boxing beautifully, Bradley remains competitive through the first six rounds. Hopkins appears content to work the body, and in the seventh, two thudding blows make Bradley gasp. In the eighth, Bradley slows noticeably and Hopkins' punches begin to land with more frequency. Bradley rallies in the ninth, bloodying Hopkins' nose.

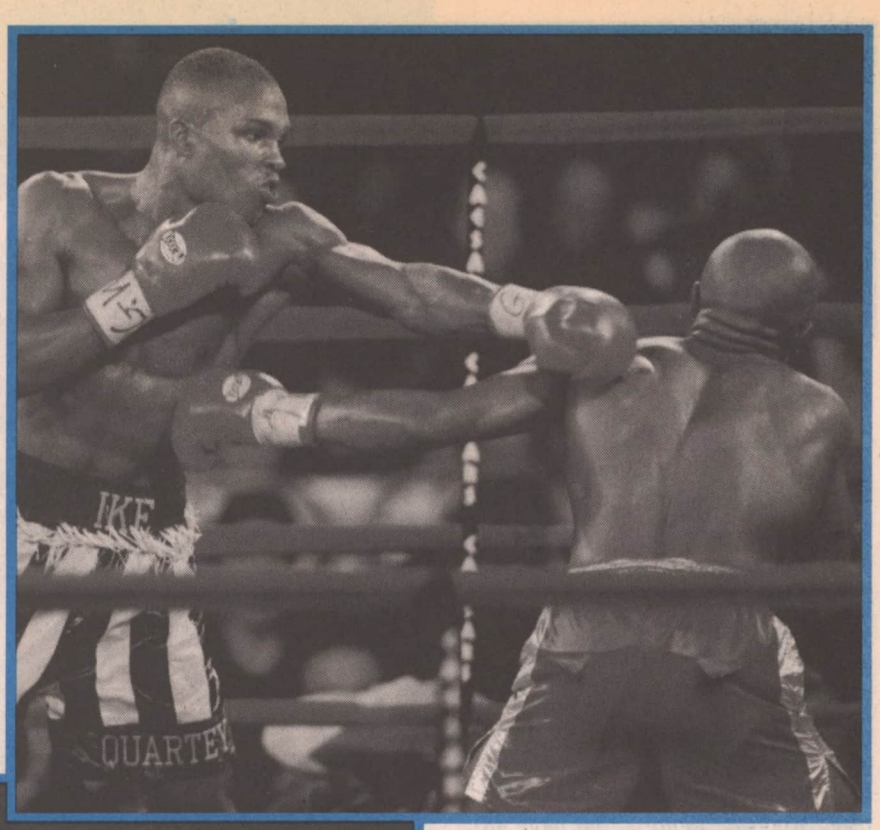
The 10th features a blistering six-punch volley that puts Bradley on the ropes. Hopkins dominates the last two rounds, though Bradley hangs tough and makes it to the final bell. The scoring: 116-112 Hopkins, 115-112 Hopkins, and 116-111 Hopkins. Hopkins by unanimous decision. **Undisputed Champion: Bernard Hopkins.**

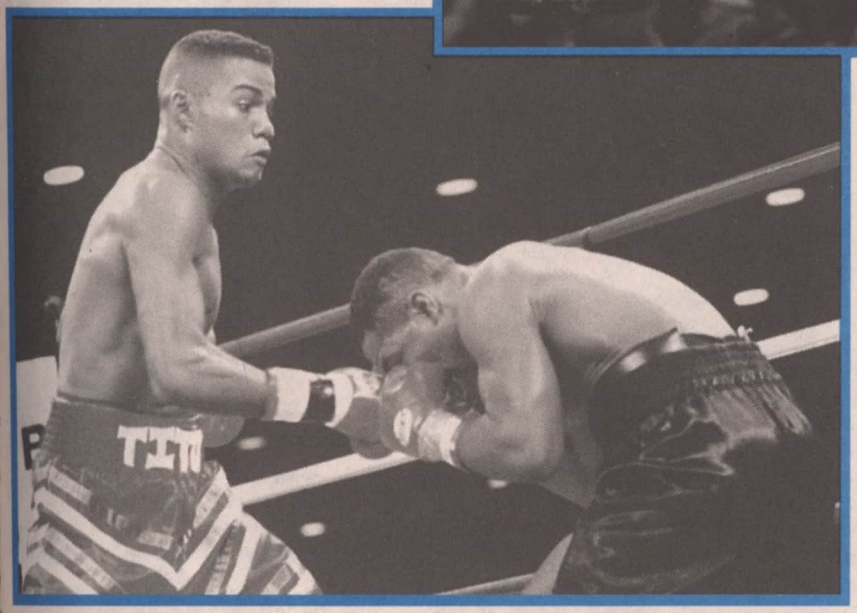
WELTERWEIGHTS

Semifinals:

Ike Quartey vs. Jose Luis Lopez

Quartey sets the tone in the first, choosing to use his boxing skills to evade the powerpunches of Lopez. The African controls the early rounds, and though Lopez lands a number of jolting shots, Quartey shrugs them off. In the fourth, Quartey nails Lopez with a right behind a stiff jab, and the Mexican bounces off the canvas. Lopez fights back during the last minute of the round and survives. Quartey resumes a ferocious body attack that is somewhat thwarted by the taller Lopez, who begins to box from the outside. By the 10th, a weakened Lopez is on the receiving end of a six-punch fusillade and takes the full count. Quartey by knockout in the 10th round.





Quartey's left hand is among the most destructive in boxing, as Oba Carr found out last October. Quartey won by 12-round decision (above). Trinidad is a murderous finisher. His killer instinct was on display during his fourth-round kayo of Larry Barnes in November '95 (left).

Semifinals:

Pernell Whitaker vs. Felix Trinidad

Utilizing a stinging jab and maximizing the effectiveness of his southpaw stance and fast feet, Whitaker pitches a shutout for the first four rounds. Trinidad digs hard to the body and matches Whitaker's hand speed during exchanges, but the stanzas clearly belong to "Sweet Pea." In the fifth, Trinidad starts cutting off the ring with more frequency. In the eighth, Whitaker slows, and Trinidad's power begins to assert itself. A short right uppercut introduces Whitaker to the canvas. He rises immediately and indicates that he isn't hurt, but Trinidad rips into him with vicious accuracy. In the ninth, Whitaker manages to evade Trinidad for two minutes, but is then shaken by raking combinations. Whitaker goes down again in the 10th. After rising and taking two damaging rights, he's out on his feet, and there's no protest when the referee jumps between the fighters. Trinidad by TKO in round 10.

Championship Match:

Felix Trinidad vs. Ike Quartey

Both fighters box conservatively for two rounds. Midway through the third, Quartey drives Trinidad to the canvas, nearly ending the fight. A low blow by Quartey gives Trinidad time to recover. In the fourth, Quartey fails to press his advantage, and in rounds five through seven, Trinidad puts on a boxing clinic; only Quartey's rock-solid chin saves him. In the eighth, Trinidad is caught flush during an exchange of hooks and goes down for a six-count. The ninth and 10th are hotly contested. Both fighters are exhausted and rest in the 11th. But in the 12th, Quartey and Trinidad trade powerpunch after powerpunch until the final bell. The cards: Quartey 114-112, Trinidad 115-113, and Trinidad 115-114. Trinidad by split decision. **Undisputed Champion: Felix Trinidad.**

(Continued on page 58)

The Fittest Fighter In The Game

By Gavin Evans

Sometimes, all it takes is one fight, in the right place, at the right time, with the right people watching.

No longer the Cinderella man of South African boxing, IBF lightweight champion Phillip Holiday has suddenly emerged as not only the best fighter in his division, but one of the most entertaining fighters in the game. Since Holiday's emphatic points win over highly regarded mandatory challenger Ivan Robinson in December *(see "Ringside Reports" on page 48)*, phones and faxes and modems have been kept warm with offers and counter-offers relating to his services.

The fight Holiday wants is a unification with unbeaten WBA lightweight champion Orzubek Nazarov. "I just want to box whoever the best of the other champions are at the time, and if that happens to be Nazarov, then so be it," he said. "Nazarov has done quite well for himself. He's defended the title a few times, and it looks like he's going to be holding it for a while, so I'd like to box him.

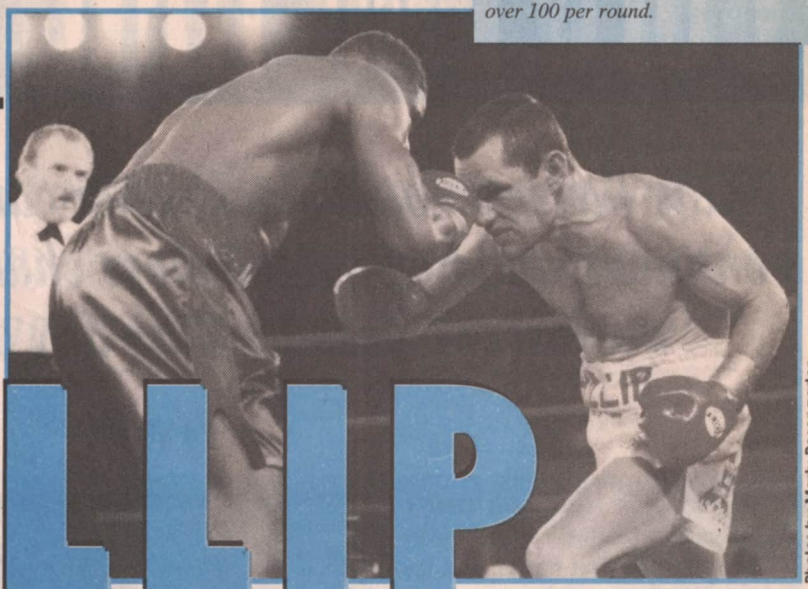
"When the fight happens, I'll work on preparing for his style, study it carefully, because boxing has a lot to do with styles, and we'll work out the best way to beat him. I'd love to fight each of the different champions."

Added Harold Volbrecht, Holiday's manager-trainer, "If I compare Phillip to Nazarov, I definitely think Phillip is the better fighter. I think he's the best lightweight in the world."

Holiday's promoters, Cedric Kushner (in the USA) and Rodney Berman (in South Africa) say they will do their best to get the fighters together this year. A more likely scenario: Both champions will be built up with a few more defenses in

(Continued on page 60)

EVERYTHING'S WORKING OUT FOR PHILLIP HOLIDAY



Holiday's defense against Ivan Robinson was a 12-round punch-athon—exactly the type of fight the South African craves. Holiday threw 1,493 blows, averaging well over 100 per round.

Photos by Marty Rosengarten

Relatively unmarked, Holiday celebrates his unanimous decision victory with (from left) Harold Volbrecht, Greg Juckett, Cedric Kushner, Eddie Sekewba, and Rodney Berman.

DOES DON KING BELONG IN THE BOXING HALL OF FAME?

"King has promoted blockbuster cards on virtually every continent, and he's staged more championship fights over the last two decades than any other promoter."

By Ed Maloney

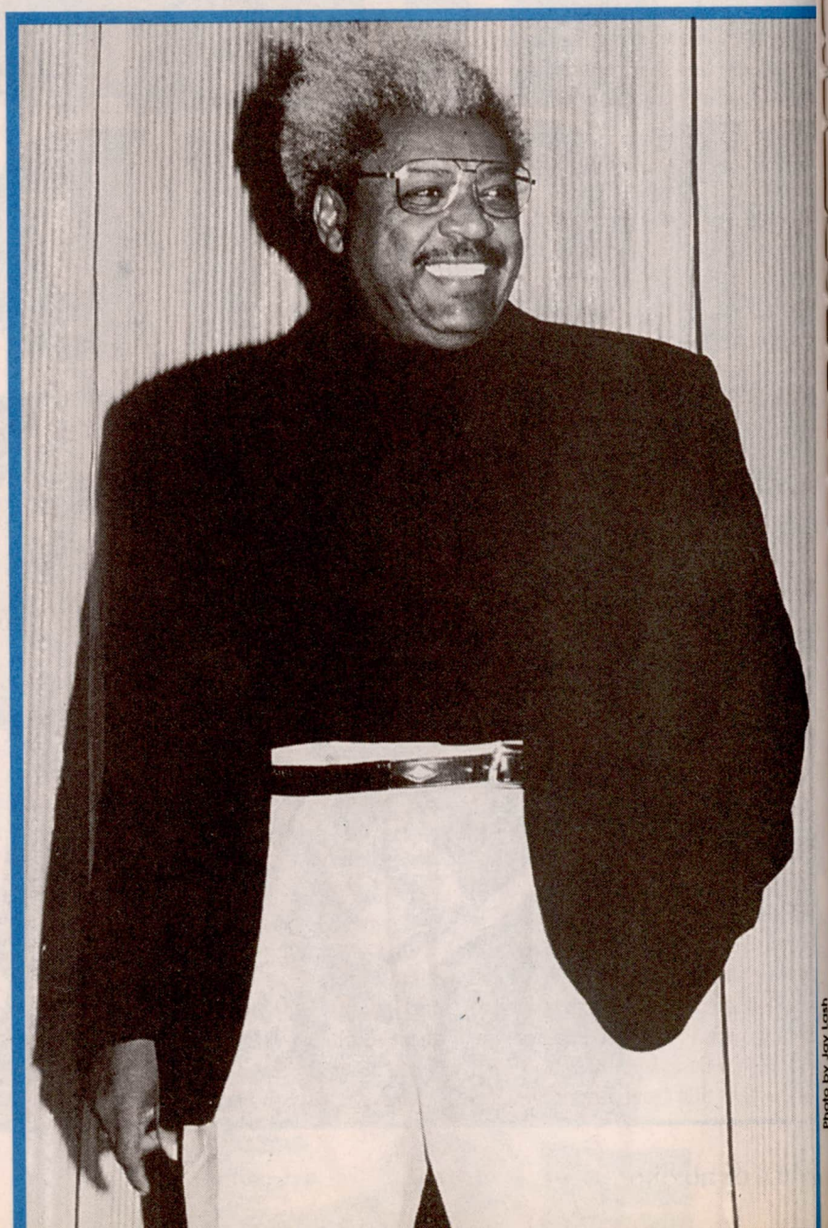


Photo by Joy Lash

No one took issue with Jimmy Cannon when the late, great journalist wrote that boxing was the "red-light district" of sports. Always has been, and probably always will be. That's why, when the folks in Canastota began laying the groundwork for the International Boxing Hall of Fame a decade ago, they specifically omitted character and virtue from the criteria for enshrinement. If character and virtue were considered, there would be very few inductees. Very few.

So it shouldn't have come as a surprise when Don King was elected in the Non-Participant category with the Class of '97. Still, the news was greeted with shock and disgust by those who are mistaken as to the criteria for enshrinement, especially the members of the media who never took the time to read the "Induction Criteria of the IBHF" that accompanies their ballot.

When *most* people are informed that the Non-Participant category is for "Honoring those who have made contributions to the sport of boxing apart from roles as boxers," they change their mind and acknowledge that King certainly is worthy. The IBHF electors are not the College of Cardinals. Based on my knowledge of some of the inductees in the IBHF, not to mention recipients of the annual awards handed out by the Boxing Writers Association of America, character was never considered.

King has promoted blockbuster cards on virtually every continent, and he's staged more championship fights over the

(Continued on page 62)

"Not since Frankie Carbo and Blinky Palermo has anyone done more to corrupt boxing. Putting Don King in the Hall of Fame is like burying Benedict Arnold in Arlington."

By Michael Katz

Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Don King was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame, and the first thing boxing historian Pat Putnam wanted to know was, "How many votes did Carl receive?"

Unfair question. Wish we would have thought of it.

Fact is, there probably aren't all that many morons to blame for this fine mess. King probably didn't get that many more votes than his son the manager, certainly not much more than a handful, with only 25 voters choosing from 35 candidates in the non-participant category, which, of course, makes one suspicious that maybe King did participate.

The man raises eyebrows as well as hair.

Look, you want an argument, ask whether Jose Torres belongs in the Hall of Fame. Or Ken Norton. You've got your opinion, I've got mine. There can be no controversy over King, and you're not entitled to an opinion on this when you're so wrong. Not since Frankie Carbo and Blinky Palermo has anyone done more to corrupt boxing. Putting Don King in the Hall of Fame is like burying Benedict Arnold in Arlington.

Books can be written, and have, about the alleged crimes King has committed—threatening fighters, coercing managers, manipulating sanctioning bodies. King and his allies have done more to sink boxing to its current depths than all the divers who preceded them. His naked attempt to steal the heavyweight title from Buster Douglas with the "long count" in Tokyo and the so-called draw between Pernell Whitaker and Julio Cesar Chavez, which he happened to promote, are two major reasons why boxing is sneered at by most sports fans. *"Bull s___!"* and *"Fix!"* have been frequently chanted at his fights. World's greatest promoter? Please. The way he turned Chavez and Azumah Nelson into prelim fighters is enough to illuminate that lie. King promotes King. He looks down on fighters, the way his cardboard cutout towered over those of Muhammad Ali and Larry Holmes when he staged that mismatch.

Yes, he puts on big fights. But does the world need King to match Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield again? Did Tyson need King to make zillions of dollars when he returned to the ring? If King weren't getting a sweetheart stock deal from the MGM Grand, do you think Tyson might have gotten a better offer from, say, Caesars Palace? The fact is, King *prevents* fights because he doesn't like to make matches where he doesn't have both corners. Larceny is one of boxing's charms. Greed is not.

Boxing historian Herb Goldman, who did not vote for King but was one of the 25

(Continued on page 63)

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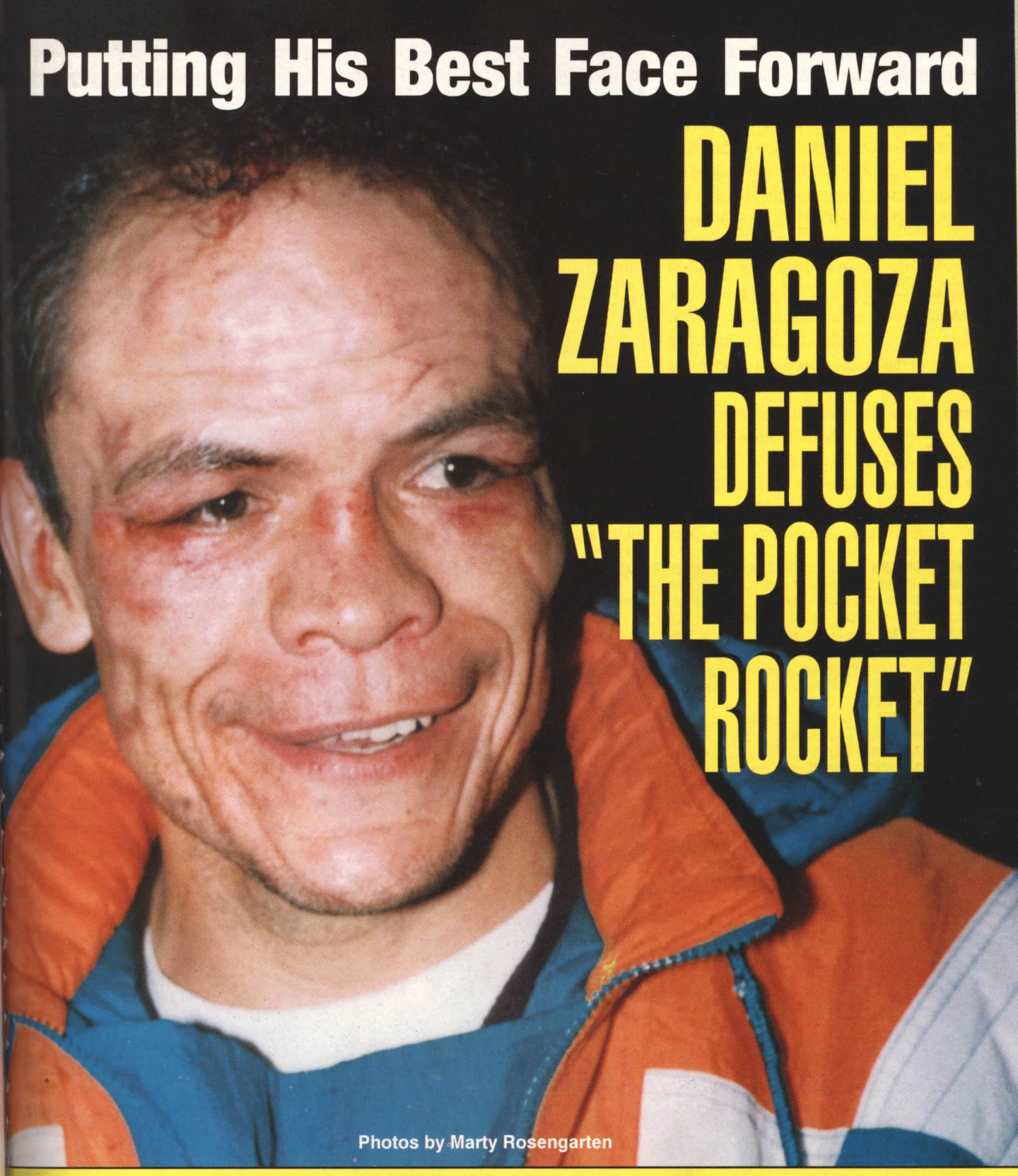


Photos by Marty Rosengarten

By Nigel Collins

Except for the fact that he was wearing a crooked smile and his wife was cradling the WBC super bantamweight belt on her lap, you might have thought 39-year-old Daniel Zaragoza was the loser. As usual, his face was a mess. There was a nick here, a slice there, and numerous splotches where his skin had been scuffed raw by punches. But you don't judge the winner of a Zaragoza fight by the way "The Mouse's" face looks when it's over. For despite the fresh additions to his Hall of Fame collection of scar tissue, Mexico's ageless wonder was very much a winner on this freezing night in Boston, just as he has been in 14 of his 20 world title fights.

Moreover, the victim this time wasn't some obscure challenger from Japan or South Korea. No, the latest fighter to run afoul of today's oldest reigning champion was Wayne McCullough, the previously unbeaten Irishman who on January 11 had sought, in vain, to use Zaragoza as a dust cloth to buff his own ascending star.

Despite his championship credentials, the craggy-faced Mexican was very much the opponent going in.

Afterward, fans who witnessed the way Zaragoza had outsmarted, outpunched, and ultimately outpointed McCullough couldn't have any doubts they were in the presence of greatness. But it was not greatness wrapped in the same sleek, youthful package we are used to seeing. Instead, reporters were confronted by a gnome-like little man, with a receding hairline and the history of his 64-bout career indelibly etched on his countenance. There is, however, something oddly beautiful about Zaragoza's mangled mug, and the pride and dignity of a champion shines through his multitude of war wounds.

As Zaragoza dabbed his face with an ice bag, his manager, Rafael Mendoza, cataloged the veteran's latest list of injuries for the assembled press. He checked them off grocery-list style, pointing to his own face to indicate where the fighter had been marked.

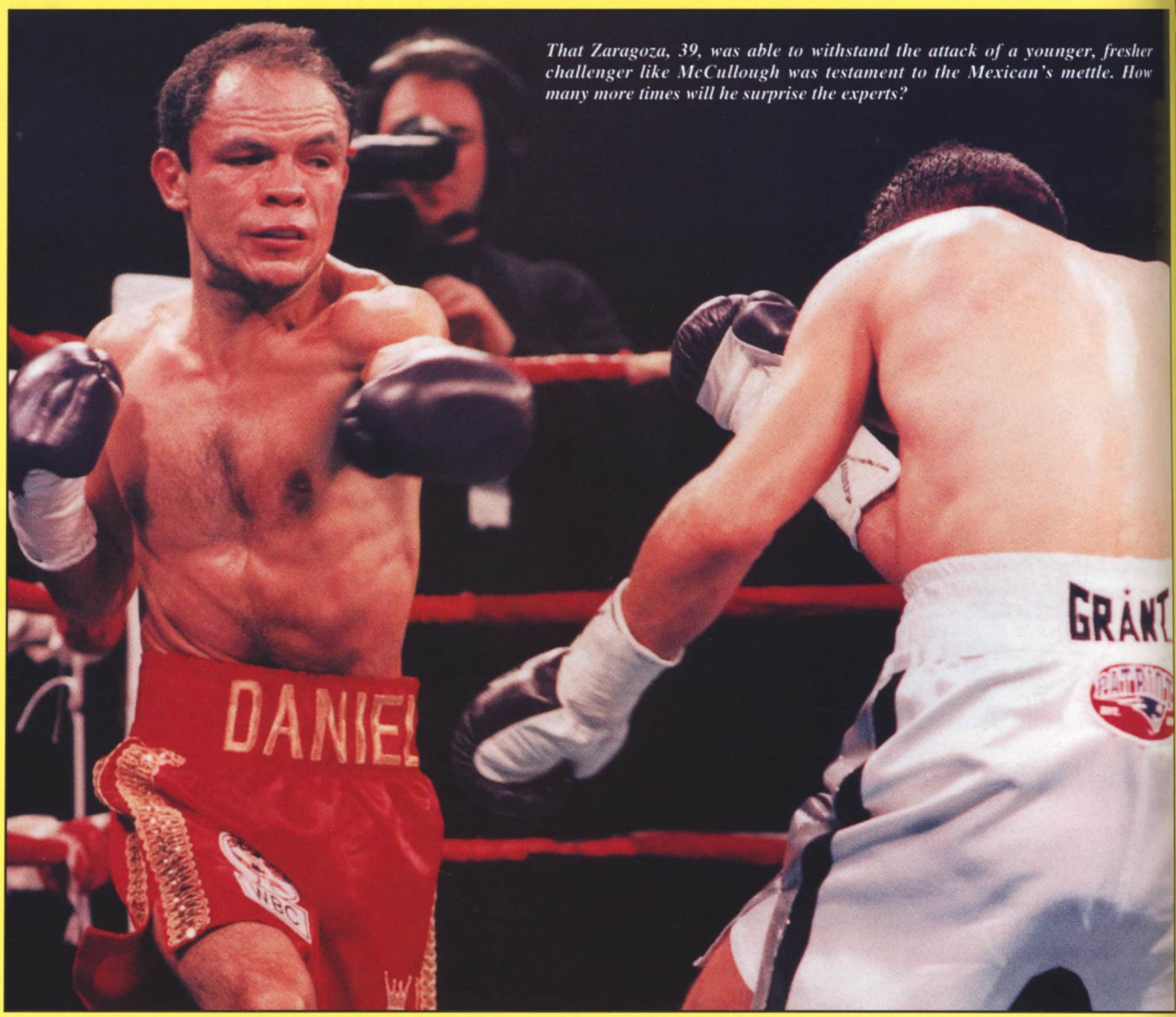
"But my heart is okay," interposed Zaragoza in English, his eyes twinkling mischievously.

You get the feeling he's used the line before. And why not? There's not a more improbable champion in boxing, and upsetting the odds and fooling the experts has become a way of life for Zaragoza. He has earned the right to sneer at those who write him off, but prefers to make his point with self-effacing humor. And when asked about the secret of fighting so well at such an advanced age, he glanced up at his interrogator and asked with feigned innocence, "Did I fight well?"

When the chuckles subsided, Zaragoza added that "discipline" is the secret to his prolonged success and that his "beautiful family" is his inspiration. As he spoke, he glanced at his wife, who was also holding his red satin trunks, the ones embroidered with four crowns, emblematic of the four WBC titles he has held at various times during his 16-year professional career.

Zaragoza began his championship run in a rather inauspicious way, beating Freddy Jackson via disqualification for the vacant WBC bantamweight title in May 1985. To put the time frame in perspective, Larry Holmes was heavyweight champion back then, Mike Tyson was scheduled for his third pro fight, and Zaragoza still had a full head of hair.

Three months later, Zaragoza was a former champ after losing a 12-round decision to Happy Lora. It was the start of a pattern he would follow for the next 10 years: win a title, lose a title, win another.



That Zaragoza, 39, was able to withstand the attack of a younger, fresher challenger like McCullough was testament to the Mexican's mettle. How many more times will he surprise the experts?

Among the most versatile champions in boxing, Zaragoza, a southpaw, was equally effective battling McCullough on the inside (above) or flashing his left hand in ring-center (right). The most amazing thing of all: "The Mouse" matched McCullough's work rate.

All told, he's held the WBC 118-pound title once and the WBC super bantamweight title three times, going 14-4-2 (5) in world title bouts. In many ways, his most recent incarnation has been the most unlikely, but also the most interesting and lucrative. Through all the overseas trips, all the nights in strange hotel rooms, all the close decisions, and all the cuts (especially all the cuts), Zaragoza has emerged as the Lazarus of the little guys, a grizzled graybeard who not only rages against the dying of the light, but is still around the next morning to see the sun come up. In fact, Zaragoza is fond of telling people he would never trade today's version of himself for a younger edition.

"No difference, except now I have to train 10, 11 weeks instead of just five," he replied when asked what concessions he's made to Father Time.

Despite Zaragoza's remarkable achievements, he appeared to be at a distinct disadvantage going into the third defense of his third reign. Not only was he fighting a talented, undefeated fighter 13 years his junior, but the venue was the Hynes Convention Center in downtown Boston, where more than 3,000 Irish-American fans were on hand to lend raucous support to their Belfast-born hero. But fighting on the road is nothing new for Zaragoza, who's never had a world title fight in his native Mexico. When he was greeted with a crescendo of boos, he laughed and covered his ears with his gloves. It takes a real smoothie to handle a situation like that with such aplomb, and The Mouse has the perfect disposition for the job.

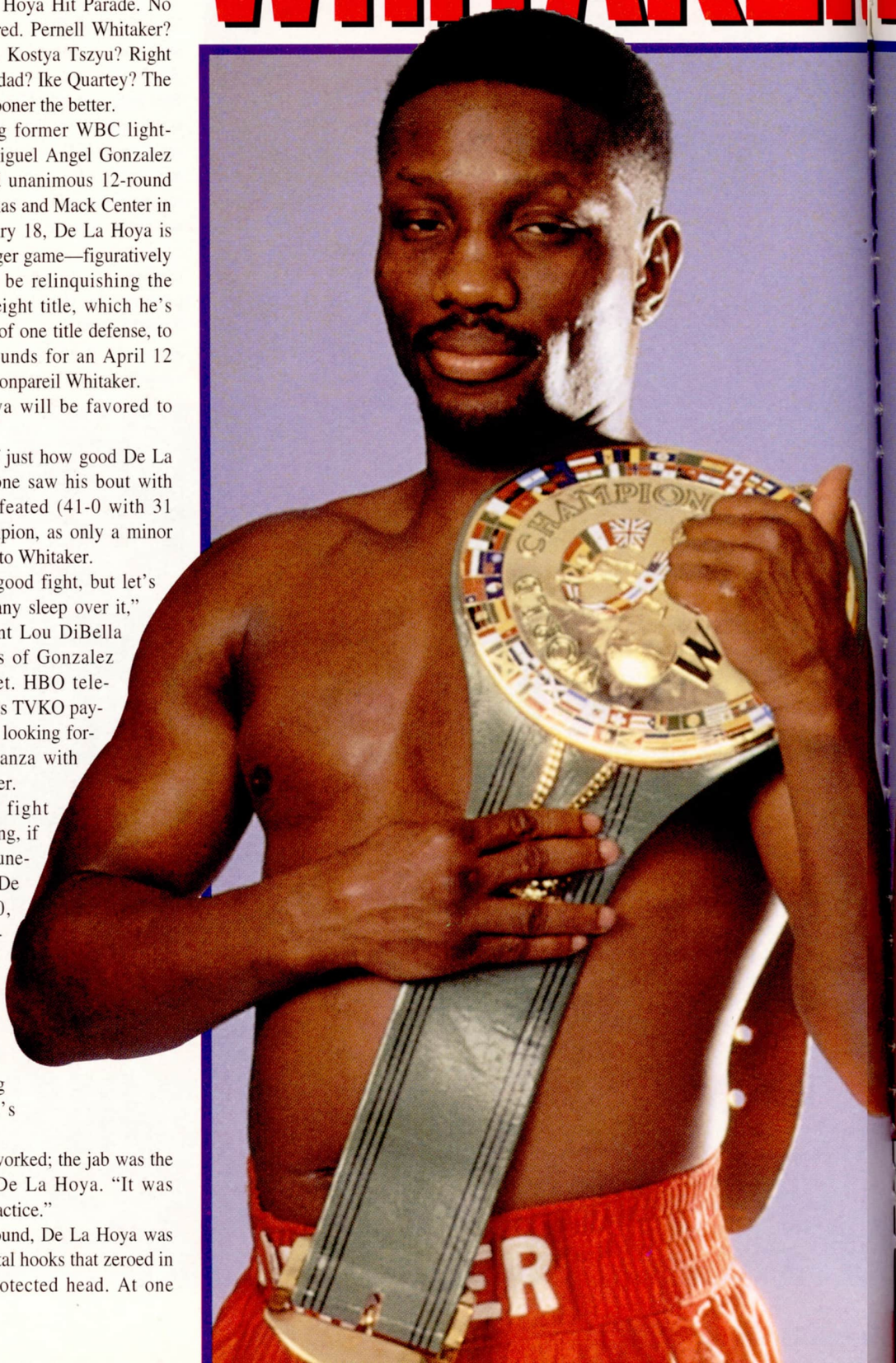
McCullough, who entered the ring wearing a jersey of the Super Bowl-bound New England Patriots, was given a thunderous reception by the chanting, banner-waving crowd. His promoter, America Presents, had lured Zaragoza into hostile territory with a purse of $500,000, and it was obvious they expected "The Pocket Rocket," who had outgrown the bantamweight division, to blast his way to a second world title.

But the house fighter quickly discovered he was up against an opponent who presented an entirely different set of problems than he'd previously encountered. Zaragoza's superior boxing technique was evident almost immediately. He nullified McCullough's attack with savvy defensive shifts, moving just enough to stay out of range, then countering from his southpaw stance with accurate lefts and rights. Even when McCullough pressured him to the ropes, the Irishman seldom managed to inflict serious damage, and frequently got the worst of the exchanges. The champion fought with relaxed precision, as comfortable with his back to the ropes as he would

(Continued on page 52)

WHITAKER/DE LA HOYA

Can "Sweet Pea" Stop Oscar's March To Greatness?



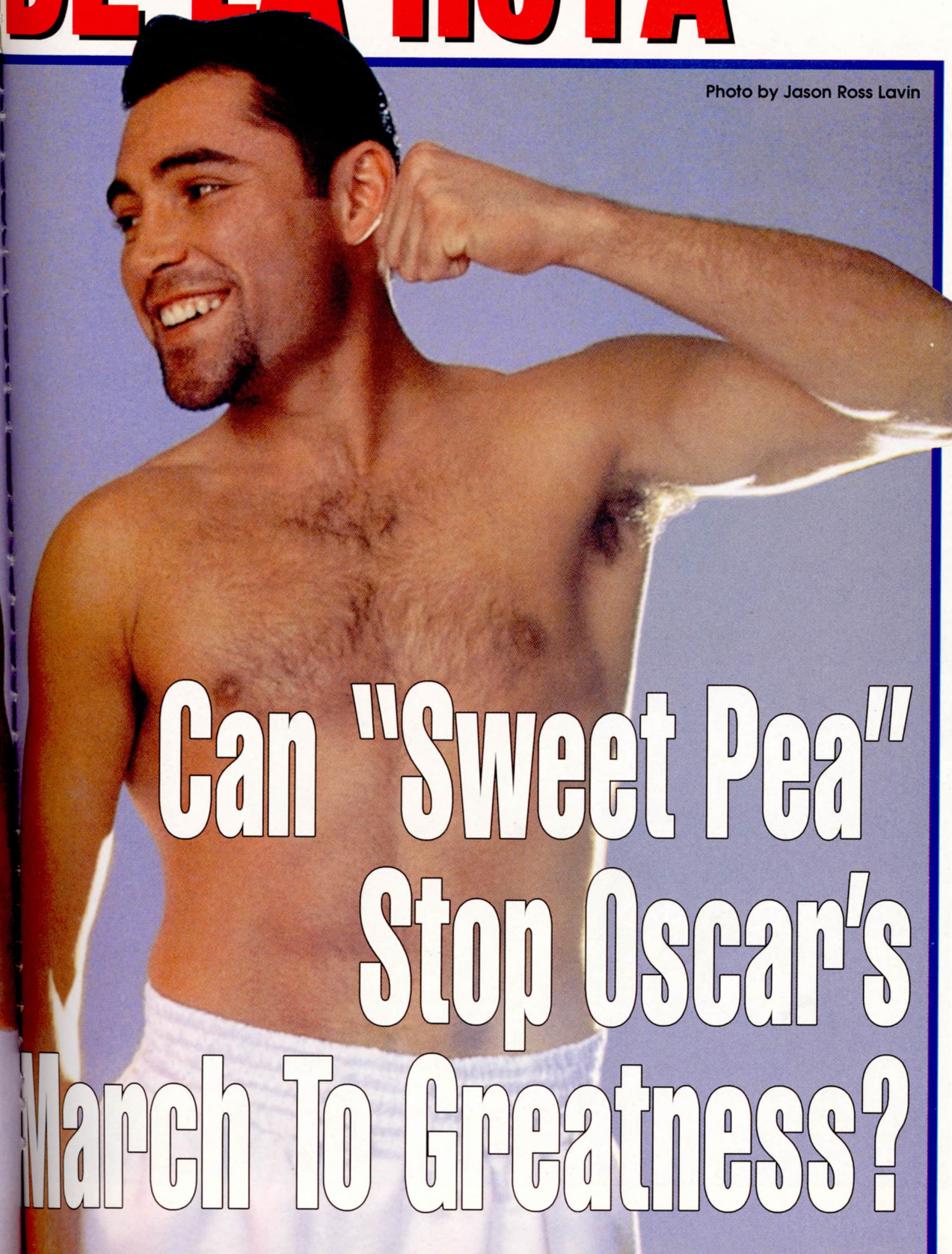


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

By Mark Jacobs

Next!

If you're a world-class fighter looking for a beating, just step up to the Oscar De La Hoya Hit Parade. No admission fee required. Pernell Whitaker? Bring him on down. Kostya Tszyu? Right this way. Felix Trinidad? Ike Quartey? The Son of Kong? The sooner the better.

After eliminating former WBC lightweight champion Miguel Angel Gonzalez via comfortable and unanimous 12-round decision at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas on January 18, De La Hoya is finally ready for bigger game—figuratively and literally. He'll be relinquishing the WBC super lightweight title, which he's proudly held for all of one title defense, to move up to 147 pounds for an April 12 superfight with the nonpareil Whitaker.

And De La Hoya will be favored to win.

It's a measure of just how good De La Hoya is that everyone saw his bout with Gonzalez, an undefeated (41-0 with 31 kayos) former champion, as only a minor obstacle on the road to Whitaker.

"It should be a good fight, but let's say I'm not losing any sleep over it," HBO Vice President Lou DiBella said of the chances of Gonzalez pulling off an upset. HBO televised the match on its TVKO pay-per-view arm and is looking forward to a PPV bonanza with De La Hoya-Whitaker.

The Gonzalez fight proved an entertaining, if mostly one-sided, tune-up. From the start, De La Hoya, 140, Montebello, California, dominated with a wicked jab, popping the punch into the center of Gonzalez' face and repeatedly snapping back the Mexican's head.

"The fight plan worked; the jab was the whole key," said De La Hoya. "It was almost like target practice."

By the second round, De La Hoya was opening up with brutal hooks that zeroed in on Gonzalez' unprotected head. At one

point, Gonzalez, 140, Mexico City, Mexico, was driven into the ropes, but he mockingly dropped his hands to show he wasn't hurt. De La Hoya seemed to take offense and launched a pair of devastating hooks to end the round.

Oddly, De La Hoya opened the third round moving and not punching, which allowed Gonzalez to stalk him. It was perhaps an homage to former featherweight champion and defensive genius Willie Pep, who was known for winning rounds in such a manner. Pep was in the audience at De La Hoya's invitation.

De La Hoya admitted the Hall of Famer's presence put on a little added pressure. "I thought I might try to win rounds without punching," he said. Postscript: All three judges gave the third round to Gonzalez. Perhaps another day, Oscar.

The champion was back to business in the fourth, bludgeoning his opponent with the jab. Gonzalez, apparently growing frustrated, was twice warned by referee Mills Lane (USA), one for a pair of low blows, and once for hitting on the break.

The challenger tried to press the fight through the middle rounds, seeking to rough up De La Hoya on the inside. All this bought him was a continued shellacking from the champion's hook, and a point deduction when he struck De La Hoya in the back of the head in round seven.

Though Gonzalez' aggression was largely ineffective, he did manage to cause some swelling under De La Hoya's left eye, which may have given the impression "The Golden Boy" was having a tougher fight than it appeared at ringside. In the last rounds, De La Hoya had much more spring in his legs than Gonzalez. The 11th opened with conflicting cheers of "Oscar! Oscar!" and "May-hee-co! May-hee-co!" from the crowd of 11,000, and ended with De La Hoya finally unleashing his right hand, a punch he virtually ignored all night.

"The right hand was in perfect shape," he said. "I'll have to study the videotape to understand why I didn't throw it." Maybe

SAVING A SUPERFIGHT

Pernell Whitaker KO 11 Diobelys Hurtado, *Atlantic City, New Jersey:* "Sweet Pea" indeed. Fighting more like Popeye's nephew than arguably the best fighter, pound-for-pound, in the world, WBC welterweight champion Whitaker nonetheless emerged victorious, scoring a come-from-behind stoppage at Convention Center. It was Whitaker's eighth defense, and his last before his eagerly anticipated showdown with undefeated Oscar De La Hoya on April 12 in Las Vegas.

Underdog Hurtado gave Whitaker fits

Photo by Jason Ross Lovin

Dropped by a right hand five seconds into the fight, and then by a slap of a hook in round six, the 33-year-old Whitaker, 147, Norfolk, Virginia, was forced to play catchup, chasing the fleet-footed Hurtado, 146, a Cuban refugee based in Miami, throughout. Hurtado's awkwardness and clinching made it a sloppy fight, and referee Arthur Mercante Jr. (USA) was particularly busy, twice penalizing the challenger for rabbit-punching in round five and holding behind the neck in the seventh, and deducting a point from Whitaker for hitting Hurtado while the Cuban's back was turned in the ninth.

After 10 rounds, the southpaw champion trailed by scores of 96-91, 94-92, and 93-92. With 1:20 remaining in the 11th, Whitaker, who had scored just 16 career kayos, and only one in his last nine starts, began a barrage without warning. A left stunned Hurtado, who fell against the ropes. Whitaker followed with another left, and then another, and another and ... There were nine followup lefts in all, and by the time Mercante belatedly stopped the fight at the 1:52 mark, Hurtado, 20-1 (13), had fallen through the ropes.

The judges were Jose Lazaro Carrasco (Spain), Sergio Silvi (Italy), and John Stewart (USA).

"It's not over till we say it's over," said Whitaker, 40-1-1 (17). "He gave me all that I could handle for all of 11 rounds. He fought a terrific fight. He gave me my money's worth."

"This guy gave me my 14th heart attack today," Lou Duva, Whitaker's co-manager, said of his charge.

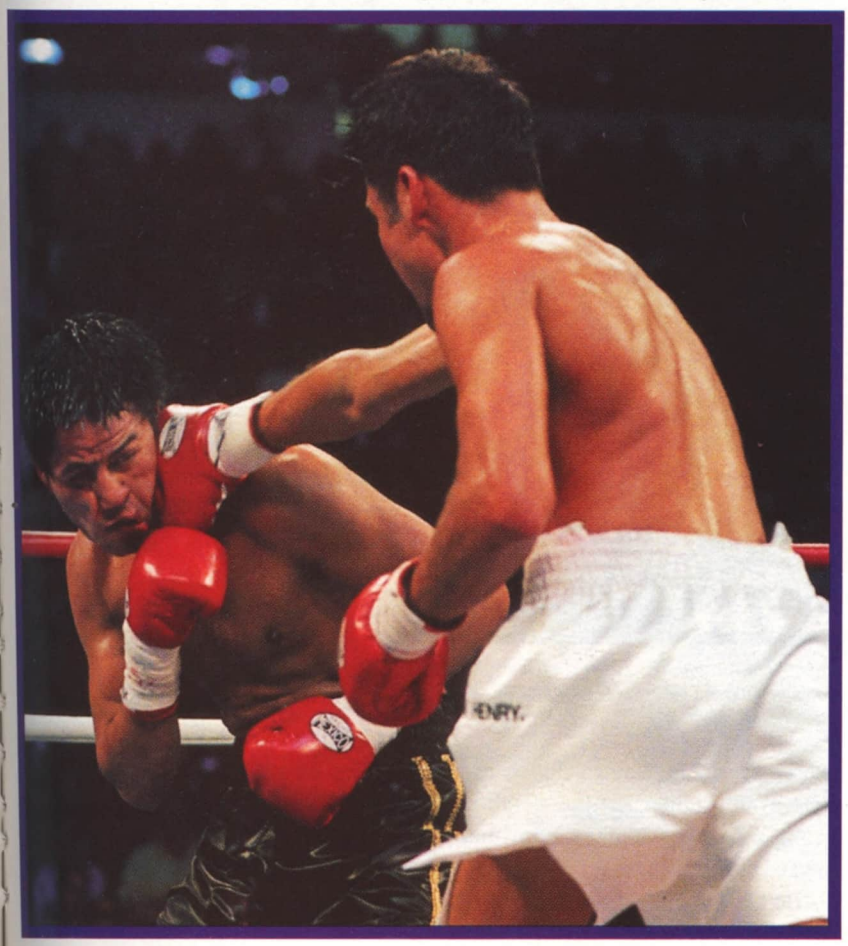
Despite having barely saved his superfight with De La Hoya, Whitaker was cocky and confident. "Come April 12, I'm the teacher," he said. "If the student doesn't bring an apple to the teacher, then I'll have to punish him." To which De La Hoya replied, "You're a good teacher, Whitaker, but I'm going to graduate with honors."

(1-24-97)

–Dan Hirshberg

Photos by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

De La Hoya did much of his damage with his left hand, whether scoring with jabs or hooks (above). When "The Golden Boy" did throw the right, his connect rate was also high (below).



it was because he didn't need to.

After Gonzalez suffered another lost point for rabbit-punching on the break in the last round, the decision was a foregone conclusion. Bob Logist (Belgium) scored for De La Hoya by 117-111, John Keane (England) 117-110, and Anek Hongtongkam (Thailand) 117-109.

CompuBox punchstats showed De La Hoya landing 361 of 561 punches for a 64 percent connect rate, including a whopping 67 percent accuracy with his jab. By contrast, Gonzalez landed 251 of 736 blows (34 percent), and only 24 percent of his jabs.

"It's not his power, it's his speed," Gonzalez said of the champion. "When he hits you with one, it's almost certain he'll hit you with a second one."

De La Hoya has now concluded his Sherman-like march through the ranks of Mexican and Mexican-American lighter-weight fighters such as Gonzalez, Julio Cesar Chavez, Rafael Ruelas, et al. He may even finally win over the Mexican boxing constituency, who seemed to turn against Gonzalez following his failure to return the WBC super lightweight title, formerly held by Chavez, back to Mexico.

After claiming he was tight in the early rounds, Gonzalez was hammered by

WHITAKER-DE LA HOYA: WHO'S GONNA WIN?

Angelo Dundee: "It's a very interesting matchup. I think De La Hoya's maturing gradually, and now he's there. He's getting better with each fight. Whitaker, on the other hand, is on the downside. De La Hoya's just too big, and with the added weight, he'll be that much stronger. I like Oscar big. De La Hoya by mid-rounds stoppage."

Teddy Atlas: "Whitaker's fight against Diobelys Hurtado can actually hurt De La Hoya because he might think he's got easy pickin's. It's human nature that when you're at a certain confidence level, you think a fight will be easier than it really is. De La Hoya showed inconsistency for the first time against Miguel Angel Gonzalez. If the younger Whitaker can show up for one night, the advantage is to him. But I have to go with Oscar. There comes a time when the young lions eat the old ones. Oscar is real. He can survive even a good Whitaker for a while, then take advantage of what Whitaker isn't and make him look old. De La Hoya by decision."

Don Turner: "Whitaker is a tough nut to crack. You may not like to look at him, but he's a throwback, a great, great fighter. He finds a way to win. But De La Hoya is by far the best young talent I've seen in a very long time. The other fight [vs. Miguel Angel Gonzalez], he reminded me of Ray Robinson. He's a well-well-schooled fighter. It won't be easy, but De La Hoya by decision."

Eddie Futch: "I've been very impressed with De La Hoya's development. Whitaker's had a brilliant career with a very effective style, but he's on the downside. De La Hoya has come on and become quite an accomplished fighter. His youth, speed, all-round boxing ability, and the additional experience he's gained will bring him home a winner. De La Hoya had too much of everything, but Whitaker's cuteness will allow him to last the distance. De La Hoya by decision."

Emanuel Steward: "What's good about this fight is that in their last bouts, both guys looked beatable. That makes this very interesting. I keep thinking De La Hoya and his speed should be too much for Whitaker. But something inside me says Whitaker. He has the mental toughness, and we don't know yet if De La Hoya has it. I'm leaning by a hair to Whitaker. Whitaker by close decision."

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

De La Hoya may be boxing's future, and a favorite to beat Whitaker, but the always-confident "Sweet Pea" also got a lot of attention at the press conference announcing the superfight. Whether the WBC welterweight champion can live up to his strong words is another matter.

Mexican reporters as hard as he had been by De La Hoya. "You're a professional; how can you say you were tense?" he was asked. "The truth is, I was," was Gonzalez' only response.

While Gonzalez' popularity may have taken a drop, The Golden Boy seems to shine even brighter. At the weigh-in, a throng of young women continually shrieked out his name.

"He's like the Beatles," someone commented.

So De La Hoya's magical mystery tour now leads to Whitaker and the biggest fight of his life. He has promised to be even sharper for that match. Some feel he'll need to be.

"I think some of Oscar's weaknesses were exposed tonight," said Gonzalez' co-trainer, Emanuel Steward. "I don't think Oscar will have the confidence-level going in, so Whitaker has a very good chance of winning."

De La Hoya and his trainer, Jesus Rivero, know they'll be facing a completely different type of test in the WBC welterweight champion. Whitaker is one of the slickest boxers in the business, drawing comparisons to Pep for his defensive wizardry. Team De La Hoya acknowledges Oscar will have to change some things for this fight. Still, De La Hoya will be the younger, taller, fresher fighter. After just 23 bouts without a loss, he's already near the top of everybody's pound-for-pound list. Whitaker is perceived to be fading, especially after his come-from-behind victory over Diobelys Hurtado, scored one week after De La Hoya defeated Gonzalez.

(Continued on page 52)

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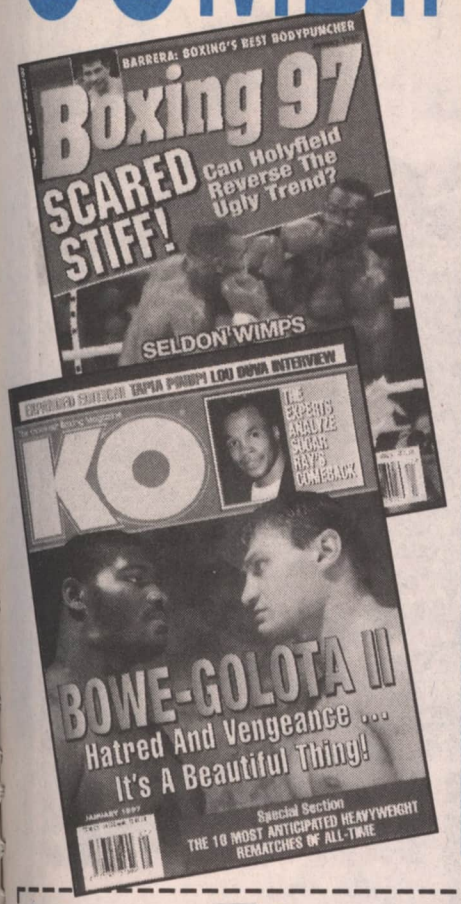

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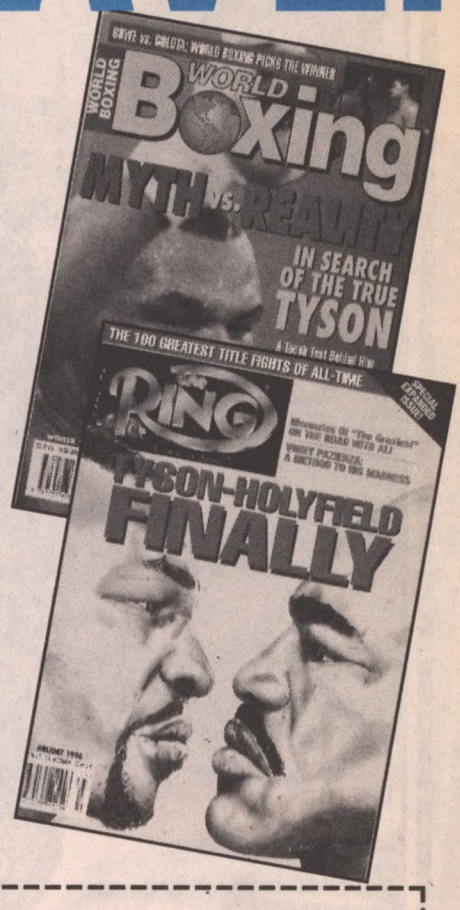

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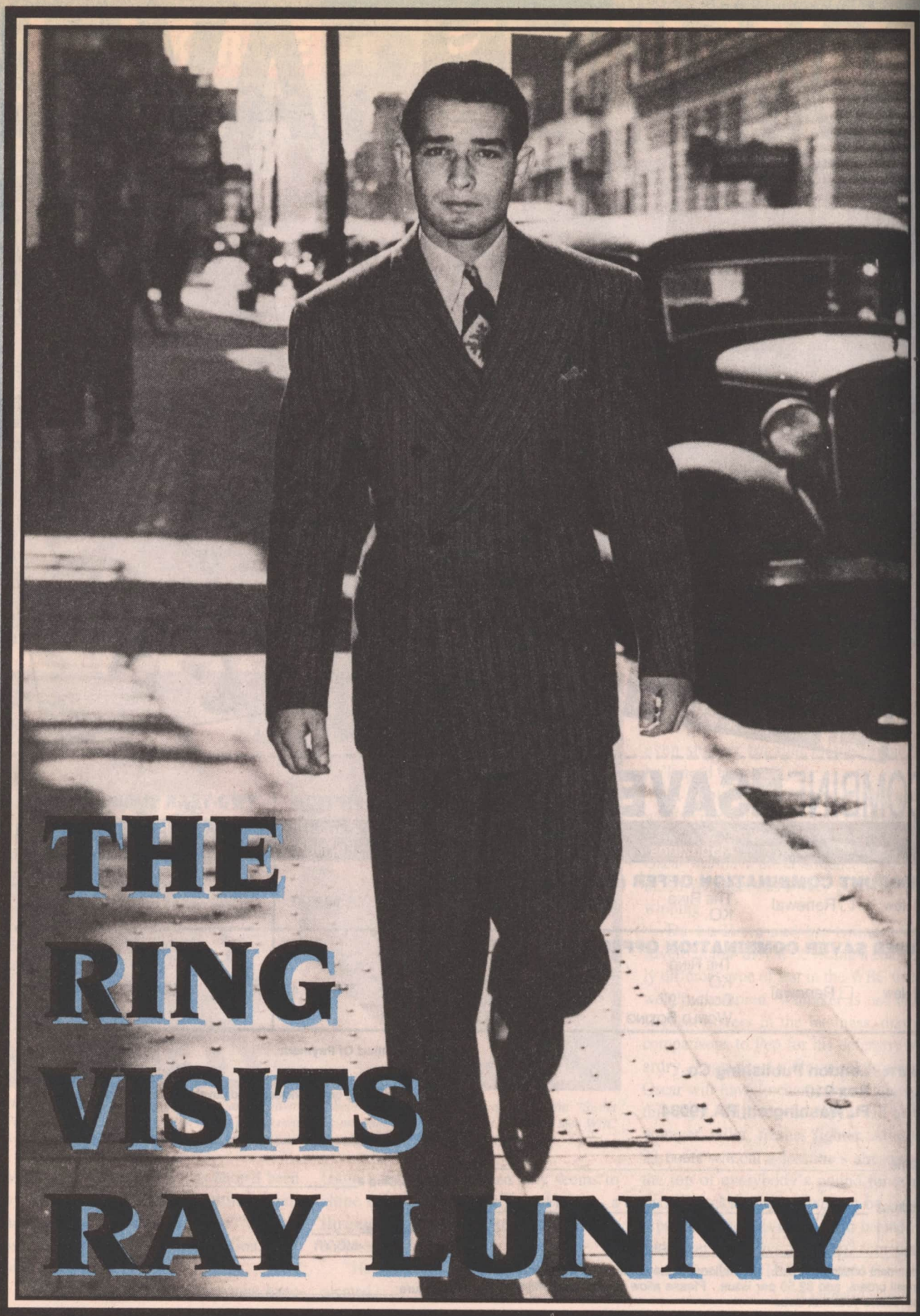


THE RING VISITS RAY LUNNY

"A Fistic Fred Astaire"

By Pete Ehrmann

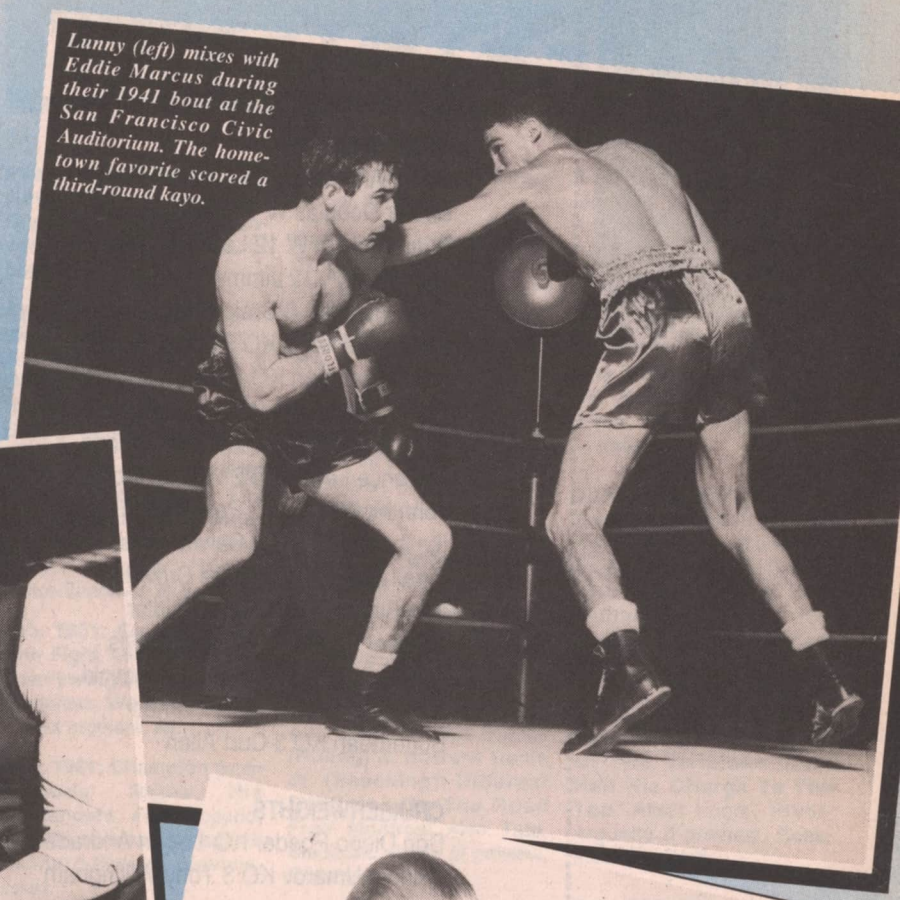
He loved his managers, liked his opponents, and won't even curse the fates that, at the peak of his boxing career, gave him a world war to fight instead of a world title to fight for. If he was anybody but Ray Lunny, you'd almost wonder if he got hit too many times in the head or something.

Not that the lightweight sensation of the West Coast, once described as a "leather-bound edition of *How To Box*," didn't take some lumps in the ring. Almost 55 years ago in Los Angeles, he and former featherweight champion Richie Lemos took turns knocking each other to the canvas before Lemos finally ended it in the sixth round.

"*Ohhh*—he could punch!" groans Lunny, who was down four times to Lemos' three in that classic at the Olympic Auditorium. "He hit you in the elbow and your jaw started to ache."

There are some fighters today who don't seem to know their elbows from their jaw who are called champions of the world. But that's something else that

(Continued on page 63)



Lunny (left) mixes with Eddie Marcus during their 1941 bout at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium. The hometown favorite scored a third-round kayo.

As manager Joey Fox instructed him in 1941, so did Lunny instruct his son, junior lightweight Ray Lunny III, in 1975 (bottom right).

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Henry Akinwande W 12 Scott Welch
Buster Douglas W 10 Rocky Pepeli
Brian Nielsen W 12 Larry Holmes
John Ruiz W 12 Jimmy Thunder
Chris Byrd KO 6 Craig Petersen
Jeremy Williams KO 3 Louis Monaco
Hasim Rahman KO 1 Marshall Tillman
Ahmad Abdin KO 2 Tony LaRosa
Larry Donald W 8 Cleveland Woods
Terrence Lewis KO 2 William Morris
John McClain KO 1 Peter Smith
Ike Ibeabuchi KO 3 Calvin Jones
Tyrell Biggs KO 1 Andre Crowder
Iran Barkley KO 1 Dave Fiddler
Michael Dokes W 10 Doug Davis
Gerrie Coetzee KO 3 Dan Kosmicki
Nate Jones KO 1 Jerry Barnes
Butterbean KO 3 Curt Allen

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Don Diego Poeder KO 1 John Andrade
Asludin Umarov KO 3 Tony Willingham

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Michael Nunn KO 2 Rudy Nix
Crawford Ashley KO 1 Peter Kramarenko

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Joseph Kiwanuka KO 2 Heath Todd
Joe Calzaghe KO 2 Carlos Christie
Billy Lewis W 12 Troy Watson

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Dana Rosenblatt W 10 Glenwood Brown
Brian Barbosa KO 1 Ron Johnson
Aaron Davis W 12 Tony Marshall
Hasine Cherifi W 12 Branko Soboto
Neville Brown KO 4 Willie Quinn
Eric Holland W 12 Lupe Aquino

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Terry Norris KO 10 Nick Rupa
(Retains WBC & IBF Titles)
Carl Daniels KO 3 James Mason
Bronco McKart KO 1 Shane Lanham
Raul Marquez KO 5 Rafael Williams
Darren Maciunski W 10 Buddy McGirt
Marty Jakubowski KO 6 Kenneth Kidd
Mark Breland KO 2 Bobby Butters

WELTERWEIGHTS
Pernell Whitaker KO 11
Diobelys Hurtado
(Retains WBC Title)
Felix Trinidad KO 3 Kevin Lueshing
(Retains IBF Title)
Romallis Ellis W 10 Vince Phillips
Shannon Taylor KO 3 Jake Rodriguez
Tony Martin W 12 Kip Diggs
Adrian Stone KO 2 Johar Abu-Lashin
Ernie Artango KO 8 Gerald Reed
Larry Barnes W 12 Tyrone Jackson
Carlos Palomino KO 8 Ismael Diaz

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Oscar De La Hoya W 12
Miguel Angel Gonzalez
(Retains WBC Title)
Khalid Rahilou KO 11 Frankie Randall
(Wins WBA Title)
Kostya Tszyu Tech. Draw 1
Leonardo Mas
(Retains IBF Title)
Harold Bennett KO 1 Freddy Ladd
Soren Sondergaard KO 7 Victor Baranov
David Diaz W 4 Mark Andreske

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Steve Johnston W 10 Jose Luis Baltazar
John-John Molina W 10 James Crayton
Anatoly Alexandrov KO 7 Karl Taylor
Wilson Rodriguez KO 3 Manuel Diaz
Carlos Hernandez W 10 Goyo Vargas
Daniel Lujan D 12 Juan Lazcano

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Jorge Paez W 12 Julian Wheeler
Tony Pep W 12 Louie Espinoza
Saul Duran KO 6 Hector Velazquez
Floyd Mayweather Jr. KO 1 Jerry Cooper

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Welcome Ncita KO 3 Narciso Valenzuela
Paul Ingle KO 8 Colin McMillan

Jon Jo Irwin W 12 Rick Rayner
Zahir Raheem W 4 Dennis Roberts
Zahir Raheem W 4
Jesus Aragon-Gamez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Daniel Zaragoza W 12
Wayne McCullough
(Retains WBC Title)
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi KO 10
Fernando Quiroz Alanis
Johnny Armour KO 8 Lyndon Kershaw

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Paulie Ayala W 12 Cuauhtemoc Gomez
Jesper Jensen W 8 Louis Veitch
Gerardo Martinez W 10
Juan Luis Torres
Lakhin CP Gym KO 4 Edwin Casano

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Satoshi Iida W 10 Jin Jyun Yuh
Andy Agosto KO 2 Manuel Robles

FLYWEIGHTS
Chokchai 3K Battery W 10 Ricky Sales
Takashi Ohba KO 2 Raul Cabato
Sornpichai Pisanurachan KO 11
Daniel Ward
Eric Morel KO 1 Ruben Romero

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Mauricio Pastrana W 12 Michael Carbajal
(Wins IBF Title)
Jesus Chong KO 10 Diego Andrade
Hadao CP Gym KO 1 Damden Kiatkansarak

STRAWWEIGHTS
Rosendo Alvarez KO 11
Songkram Porpaoin
(Retains WBA Title)
Ratanapol Sor Voraphin KO 5
Eddie Felislida
(Non-Title Bout)
Chana Porpaoin KO 3 Alpong Navaja

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER of the MONTH

It's been said that Zaragoza's face, composed entirely of angular bones and scar tissue, tells his story. Certain career facts are pretty revealing, too. Consider that of Zaragoza's 20 world title fights, none has come in his native Mexico. And consider that when he regained the WBC super bantamweight crown in 1995, the southpaw became the fourth-oldest fighter ever to win a world title.

But the reason we're honoring "The Mouse" is that, at age 39, he scored the biggest win of his career, a split 12-round decision over the favored Wayne McCullough in challenger-friendly Boston. *(See story on page 35.)*

Zaragoza has never been as sensational as "The Z-Boys," countrymen Carlos Zarate and Alfonso Zamora. And he has never been as celebrated as Mexican legends Salvador Sanchez and Julio Cesar Chavez. But as was suggested by the McCullough fight, he's carved his own niche. If you've always underrated Zaragoza, don't feel bad. Sometimes it takes time to recognize substance over style.

• • • •

Daniel Zaragoza

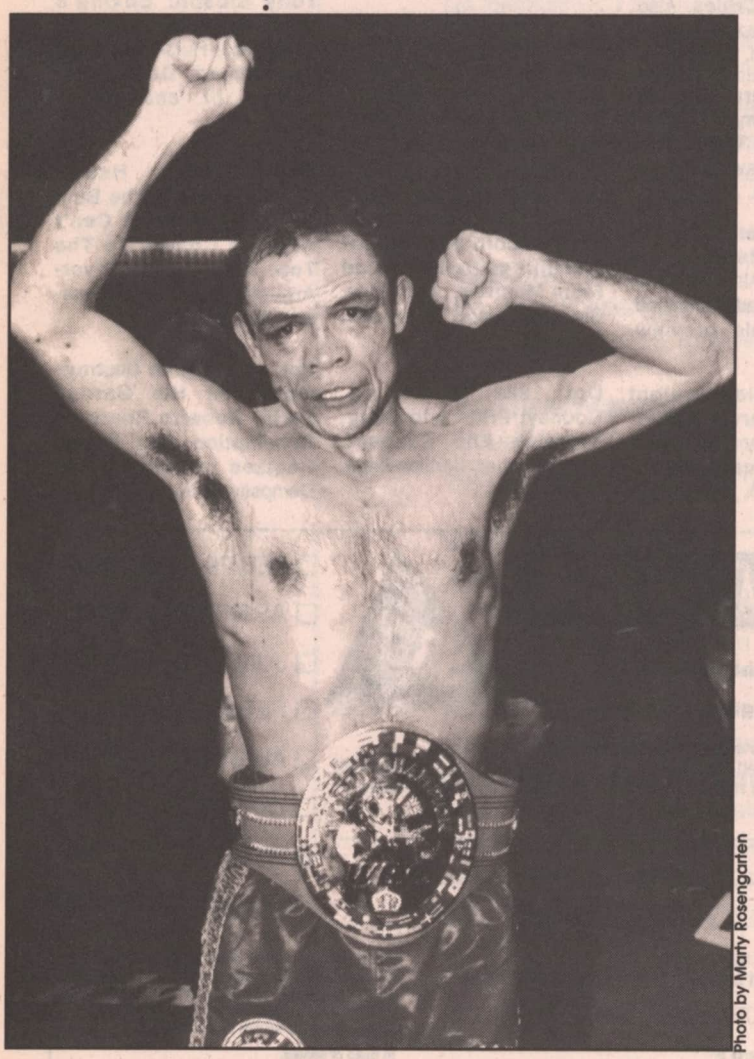


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Antonio Cermeno W 12 Yuichi Kasai

Las Vegas, Nevada: Making his second defense in six weeks, WBA junior featherweight champion Cermeno used his superior height, reach, and speed to secure a hard-earned unanimous decision over mandatory challenger Kasai before a crowd of 2,200 at the Aladdin Hotel-Casino. It was Cermeno's fourth defense since dethroning Wilfredo Vazquez in May 1995.

The 27-year-old Cermeno, 121, Miranda, Venezuela, dominated against the ever-pressing challenger with jabs and double-combinations. Kasai, 121½, Tokyo, Japan, was outpunched by 8-1. Backed by several hundred fans, he tried to land big right hands, but with the exception of rounds five, six, and 10, he was largely unsuccessful.

The counterpunching Cermeno, 26-1 (16), controlled the tempo all the way, and by the middle rounds proved he was capable of fighting effectively whether outside or in close. In ring-center, Kasai, 24-3-1 (16), worked behind a peekaboo defense. But when Cermeno fired away, all the challenger could do was clinch.

The fighters butted heads on several occasions. In the fourth, such a butt, ruled accidental by referee Mitch Halpern (USA), resulted in a cut on Kasai's left brow. The fighters punched after the bell ending round six, and both were warned by the third man.

Hector Hernandez (Mexico) and Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) scored 117-112 and Chuck Giampa (USA) 118-109. THE RING scored for Cermeno by 120-109.

"Kasai was a bit unorthodox and a little tougher than I expected," the winner said through an interpreter. "But he was the top contender, so I really didn't figure this was an automatic win. Yuichi's style was a little difficult, and he surprised me when I got him with a couple of heavy shots in the middle rounds and he didn't go down."

Kasai, who also spoke through an interpreter, had no excuses. "Cermeno has good speed," he said. "His reach was longer and I couldn't get inside like I wanted to."

This was Kasai's second title shot. In 1994, he suffered a first-round kayo defeat at the hands of then-WBA champion Vazquez.

Cermeno earned $50,000 and Kasai $5,000.

Promoter: Teiken Promotions

(12-21-96)

Jack Welsh

Phillip Holiday W 12 Ivan Robinson

Uncasville, Connecticut: Before making his fifth defense of the IBF lightweight title before a crowd of 2,000 at the new Mohegan Sun Casino, Holiday was plainly thrilled to have his talents showcased on HBO's *Boxing After Dark*. And after Holiday and mandatory challenger Robinson combined to fire more than 2,500 punches over a sizzling 12 rounds of action, HBO had to be thrilled to have aired the South African's first U.S. defense.

The 25-year-old Robinson, 134, Delran, New Jersey, via Philadelphia, predicted he'd baffle the champion with speed and movement. "He's never fought anyone with hand speed like me," Robinson said. That may have been true, for Holiday, 135, Benoni, South Africa, started slowly as Robinson flurried like a windmill in the early going. Holiday was obviously stronger, and he was content to land solid counterpunches as Robinson flitted in and out.

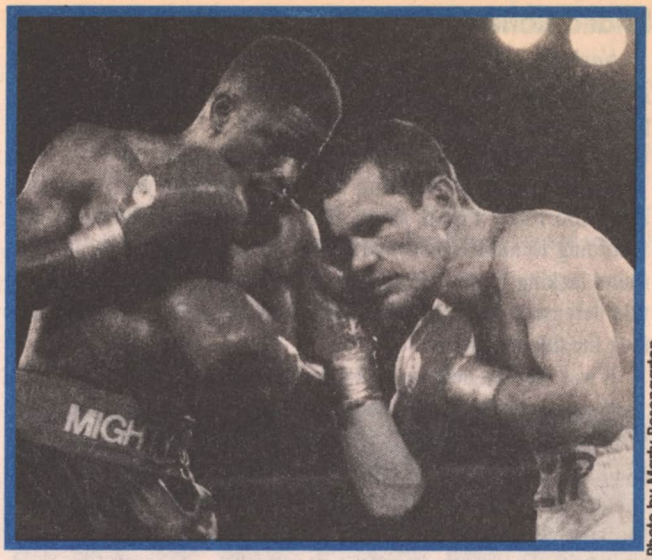


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

For Robinson, Holiday was a long night's work

Two of the judges had the bout even after four frames, and one still had it even after the eighth, but after the seventh, Holiday didn't lose a round on any of the cards. The champion's dogged pursuit and consistent body attack gradually wore down Robinson, 23-1 (10), with the Philadelphia fighter too often allowing himself to be dragged into toe-to-toe action. Whenever the duo engaged in an even trading of punches, Holiday's superior power gave him the edge. Holiday, who competes in triathlons in his spare time, swept the last five rounds, turning a close battle into a rout.

"My corner told me I was behind after the sixth round," Holiday, 30-0 (16), said afterward. "And I believed them. He stayed a lot closer than I thought he would; he actually stayed in front of me and fought me quite a bit. Conditioning wins the fight; most of the work of being a champion takes place outside the ring."

Holiday is trained by former welterweight contender Harold Volbrecht.

Steve Epstein (USA) scored 118-110, James Traylor (USA) 117-111, and Harry Davis (Canada) 116-112. THE RING had Holiday in front by 115-113. The referee was Steve Smoger (USA).

Robinson, who threw 1,093 punches to Holiday's 1,493, knew he'd veered off his game plan. "He's a true champ, but the unanimous decision was a shock to me," he said. "Holiday is one-dimensional, like I thought, but *so* relentless."

Holiday, 26, was very pleased with his performance. "Appearing on HBO was very important to me," he said. "It's a great honor."

HBO was apparently very satisfied with Holiday as well. The show, which also featured unbeaten heavyweight David Tua's 12th-round stoppage of David Izonritei, drew high ratings for *Boxing After Dark*, which has been renewed through 1997.

Promoter: Mohegan Sun, in association with Cedric Kushner Productions

(12-21-96)

Jay N. Miller

Khalid Rahilou KO 11 Frankie Randall

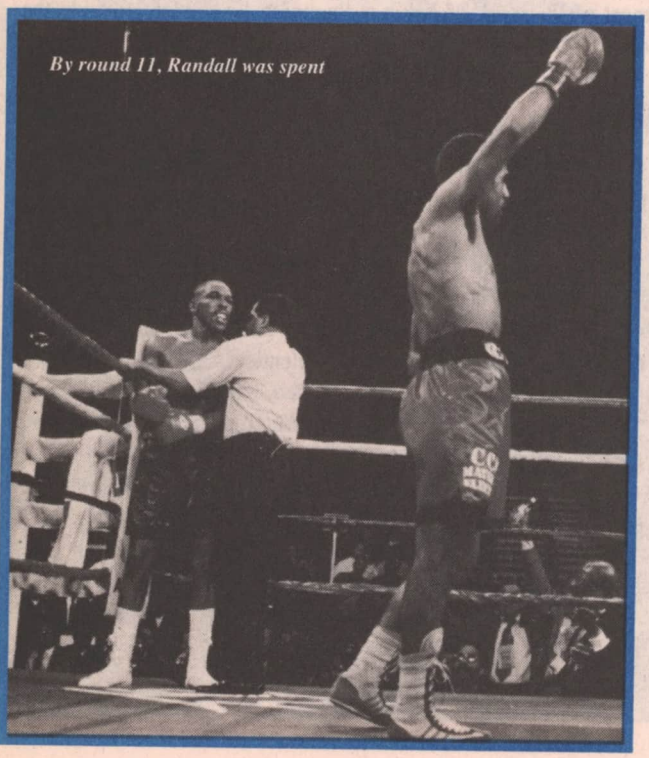
Nashville, Tennessee: The self-destructive Randall really did a job on himself this time. Don King had promised him a $1-million purse to take on IBF welterweight champion Felix Trinidad after Randall got past mandatory challenger Rahilou. But the Tennessee native, who came down to Nashville early to train, spent too many nights at the bar of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, according to numerous eyewitnesses. Perhaps as a result, he was found lacking in the late rounds of his WBA junior welterweight title defense at the Nashville Arena, and an opportunistic Rahilou took the title by TKO.

It was the first defense of Randall's second reign.

For most of the first four rounds, the 30-year-old Rahilou, 139, Conflans, France, ran Randall around like a ball on a tether. (Rahilou moved solely to his right, and away from Randall's most dangerous weapon, his straight right.) Then, as Randall, 139½, Morristown, Tennessee, tired from the chase, the challenger fought more and more until finally breaking down the fatigued champion.

In the fifth, when the former European champion stopped to score, Randall, 35, scored better. They traded bodypunches in the sixth, and Rahilou finished the round with some straight rights to the head. In the eighth, Randall, losing steam, was caught by a beautiful right uppercut while coming in. He covered up and survived, but Rahilou now had the momentum.

In the 10th, Rahilou, 29-2 (15), again landed an uppercut inside and a solid straight right just before the bell. He accelerated at the start of the 11th, and Randall, 53-5-1 (40), backed to a corner. The majority of Rahilou's two-dozen punches missed, but Randall barely answered back, and referee Rafael Ramos (USA) called a halt at the 58-second mark. It was a questionable stoppage. Had the fight gone on, however, it's unlikely Randall would have pulled out a win.



By round 11, Randall was spent

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Through 10 rounds, Hector Hernandez (Mexico) and Waldemar Schmidt (Puerto Rico) had the bout even at 96-96. Oscar Perez (USA) had Rahilou ahead by 96-94.

"It wasn't my night," said Randall. "I am not finished."

How long Rahilou can keep the belt is anybody's guess. He owns a reputation as a runner, but he also showed he can stick to a fight plan and find a way to win. His team promised the aging Randall a rematch, but that's a familiar winner's mantra. If the new champion can find easier purses elsewhere, don't look for these two to tangle again soon.

The bout, along with Felix Trinidad-Kevin Lueshing and Terry Norris-Nick Rupa, was televised by Showtime.

Promoter: Don King Productions

(1-11-97)

Ivan G. Goldman

Felix Trinidad KO 3 Kevin Lueshing

Nashville, Tennessee: This was a typical Trinidad contest: The fight, held at the Nashville Arena, didn't really get started until the other guy knocked him down. As is his custom, the speedy IBF welterweight king with the terminator punch got up and ended proceedings with no judges required.

It was the 24-year-old Trinidad's 11th defense, and perhaps his last. He's been complaining that making 147 pounds is too tough for his 5'11" frame. Look for him to challenge IBF-WBC junior middleweight champion Terry Norris sometime later this year.

For what it's worth, the 28-year-old Lueshing, 146½, Westerham, Kent, England, was ahead on all three cards when reality struck in round three. Coming in with a record of 19-1 (16), the British welterweight champion had fought only once outside England and was pretty much an unknown quantity. The same could not be said of Trinidad, 147, Cupey Alto, Puerto Rico, who is near the top of every pound-for-pound list.

Round one was deadly dull. The fighters circled and threw almost nothing. In the second, Trinidad tried a right off the ropes, and the 5'11" Lueshing, a lefthander who fights in an orthodox stance, caught the champion with a perfect counter hook that put him down. After rising, Trinidad, 31-0 (27), almost immediately went on the offensive and had Lueshing in retreat by the end of the round.

In the third, Trinidad sent his opponent to the canvas with a hook, and then again with two hooks, a right, and another hook in combination. Seconds after getting up, Lueshing went down a third time from another flurry, and referee Denny Nelson (USA) waved it off without a count at the 2:59 mark.

Nelson later explained that while the three-knockdown rule was not in effect, Lueshing looked finished.

"I was confident I was going to win when I got up," Trinidad said of the second-round knockdown.

Said Lueshing, "I let him off the hook. If I had had four or five more fights, I would've beaten him. That was a good learning experience for me."

The judges were Samuel Conde (Puerto Rico), Robert Gonzalez (USA), and Don O'Neill (USA).

Promoter: Don King Productions

(1-11-97)

Ivan G. Goldman

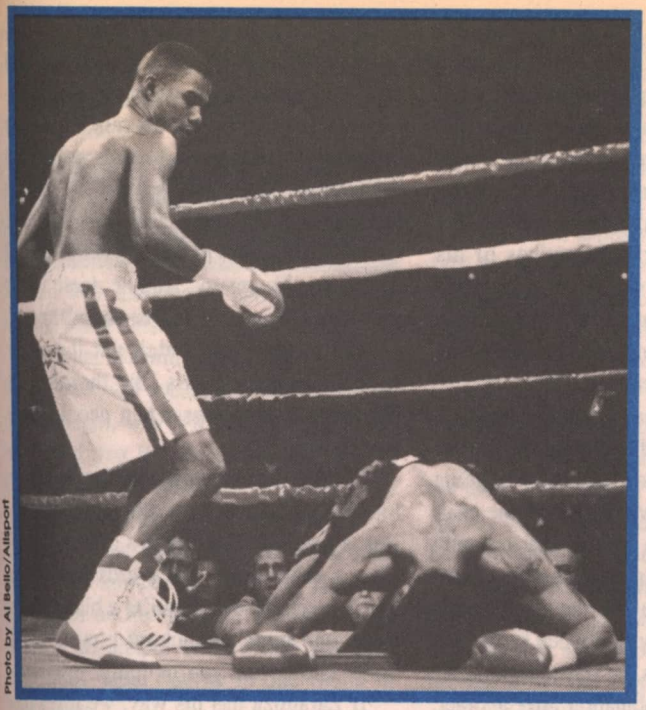


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Trinidad got off the floor to crush Lueshing

Terry Norris KO 10 Nick Rupa

Nashville, Tennessee: Fighting on the same card as future opponent Felix Trinidad, defending WBC-IBF junior middleweight champion Norris didn't make the kind of impression he wanted. Unable to take out the tenacious Rupa early, he hammered him round after round like a sculptor working fastidiously on a piece of granite.

This was a brutal, one-sided fight that went far too long. Quicker, taller, and throwing much harder punches, Norris, 154, Campo, California, was matched against the light-hitting Rupa, 152½, Bowmanville, Ontario. The 31-year-old challenger proved to be a classic tough guy who moved into the danger zone in the first round and stayed there the rest of the way, making the fight as hard as he could.

Norris, 29, moved in and out as usual, keeping the other guy guessing as he threw a variety of sharp combinations. The champion weathered some low blows, crude, face-first charges, and a few solid right hands. But by the fourth round, "Terrible Terry" was finding home repeatedly with his overhand right.

Staggered by two successive rights in the fourth, Rupa took a count from referee Marty Denkin (USA). (Replays showed that Denkin incorrectly ruled Rupa's left glove to have touched the canvas.) Had there been no mandatory count, Norris might have ended the fight then and there. Instead, Rupa had to withstand lots more punishment. By the middle rounds, his punches had lost much of their snap as the champion's head and body attack continued taking a toll.

Before the eighth, Denkin told Rupa, whose face was swollen and bruised, he'd give him one more round. He ended up giving him almost three. In the 10th, just when it seemed Norris, 45-6 (29), had nothing to fear, Rupa, 26-5-1 (14) with 1 no-contest, landed a solid right. Norris, never known for his chin, didn't flinch. He came back with a strong combination, and the spent Rupa began to crumple in a corner. A clean one-two put him down, and Denkin waved it off at the 2:34 mark.

The judges were Harry Croes (Aruba), Tony Castellano (USA), and Victor Cervantes (Mexico).

"I thought about stopping it," said Georgie Benton, Rupa's trainer. "But you had to give the kid his chance."

Said Norris, "I hit him with a lot of shots that would've knocked anyone else out. I'll go back to the drawing board and I'll be better next time."

Promoter: Don King Productions

(1-11-97)

Ivan G. Goldman

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Norris was supah-dupah against Rupa

Phichitnoi C. Siriwat KO 2 Keiji Yamaguchi

Osaka, Japan: Shorter by five inches, underdog Siriwat quickly stopped fellow southpaw Yamaguchi, wresting the WBA junior flyweight title at Osaka Prefectural Gymnasium. It was Yamaguchi's second defense.

The 22-year-old Yamaguchi, 108, Japan, boxed cautiously, content in the opening round to toss jabs at the challenger's stomach. In style, the Japanese is occasionally similar to Naseem Hamed, and in the second, he showboated with a low guard. Siriwat, 106¾, Thailand, the younger brother of former IBF flyweight king Phichit Sithbangprachan, delivered fast combinations, but Yamaguchi slipped most of them. Then, suddenly, the 21-year-old Siriwat, 17-1 (11), connected with a beautiful right hook-straight left combo, sending the champion to the deck. Yamaguchi, 20-2 (7), barely beat the count, and when he stumbled, referee Renato Caddeo (Italy) called a halt at the 2:45 mark.

Siriwat has improved dramatically under the tutelage of Cuban trainer Ismael Salas. In 1994, he had challenged for this same title, dominating before suffering a sixth-round kayo at the hands of then-champion Leo Gamez.

The judges were Marcos Torres (Panama), Julio Roldan (Venezuela), and Moo Hong Moon (South Korea).

Promoter: Green Tsuda Promotions

(12-3-96)

Joe Koizumi ■

Zaragoza-McCullough

(Continued from page 37)

have been sitting on his living room couch.

"When Wayne got him on the ropes, he was trying to hit him with a hard shot instead of going with his combinations," explained McCullough's trainer, Eddie Futch. "I guess he thought, *This is an old man, I'll hit him on the chin and get him out of there.* But it don't work that way. This guy is sharp. He would feint, throw Wayne off, and then catch him with the real punch. That was hard for Wayne to become accustomed to. He never had a southpaw do that to him before. And this guy can punch with either hand."

There were moments when it looked like McCullough, 120, might break through. He opened the sixth round by landing a pair of solid rights, but Zaragoza, 121½, tied him up, regained control with a jarring right of his own, and followed up with several hard combinations to the body. They banged heads, and McCullough, already nicked at the corner of his left eye, started bleeding from a cut in his hairline. Zaragoza was also starting to mark up, showing a small cut on the bridge of his nose.

Despite a discouraging number of punches bouncing off various parts of his anatomy, McCullough, buoyed by the deafening roar of his supporters, kept bustling forward, seldom giving the older man a chance to take a breather. His work probably looked more effective from the balcony than it actually was, but many of the rounds were close, and a lot depended on whether or not the judges would be swayed by the din that escalated every time McCullough even came close to connecting.

"The people go crazy with him, and sometimes when he was badly hurt, because of the public, he kept going," Zaragoza said when asked about the rabidly pro-McCullough crowd. "It's the same thing with Japan. I go to Japan, and the Japanese is supposed to go down in six, seven rounds, but he goes further because the public boosts him up. But when I went to the ropes, I played with [McCullough]. If you watched closely, you will see that he was not hitting me."

The pace was unrelenting, and Zaragoza first showed signs of fatigue in the ninth. Even so, the old campaigner pulled himself together in the 10th to have one of his finest rounds. For three minutes, he boxed as well as it was possible to box, totally negating McCullough's efforts while piling up points with unerring punches of his own. It was the last round he won, and during the next six minutes it was Zaragoza's heart and durability, not his craftsmanship, that carried him to victory.

In the corner between the 10th and 11th rounds, Futch told McCullough he had to take the last two rounds big if he was going to have a chance of winning. And the challenger responded in a manner that not only closed the scoring gap, but also gave hope for the future. He tore into the tiring champ with renewed intensity, and when he trapped Zaragoza on the ropes, he stayed right in his chest, firing one combination after another. By the time the bell rang, Zaragoza was oozing blood from a fresh cut and steeling himself for what he must have known was going to be a grueling finale.

Both men threw themselves at each other with wild abandon at the start of the 12th and never stopped winging punches (both fair and foul) until the final bell. It was a furious and fitting end to an outstanding fight, and although Zaragoza landed his share of shots, McCullough's blows carried more steam; he clearly won the round. Nonetheless, his storming finish was not enough to overcome Zaragoza's early lead. Except, that is, on the card of Barbara Perez, who scored for the Irishman by 115-114. Perez was overruled by Dick Flaherty and Chuck Hassett, both of whom scored for Zaragoza by 116-112. (All three judges are from the USA.) THE RING also had Zaragoza winning, but only by 115-114. The referee was Tony Perez (USA).

"I thought I fought well enough to win," said McCullough, 20-1 (14), who stood forlornly in his dressing room, his battered eyes hidden behind a pair of sunglasses, and his wife whispering words of encouragement in his ear as she massaged his neck. "I thought I won the last two rounds big enough to win. I couldn't do anything else in the early rounds anyway. I did what I could do. The guy was awkward. I stood on his toes; he stood on my toes. He was dirty with the head a bit, but he got away with it. I came on strong because I thought I'd won the fight. I was just making sure."

Zaragoza, 54-7-3 (25), agreed the fight had been close, and admitted he'd experienced a few anxious moments before the decision was announced. "Yes, I was worried because he came back very strong the last two rounds," said the champion. "He's very strong, but he is not a better fighter than me. I don't have his energy. And he doesn't have my skills. He's young; he just doesn't know."

The 85-year-old Futch put it another way: "Zaragoza fights like the old pros did, back in the days when people knew how to fight."

Coming from Futch, that says a whole lot. Zaragoza is today's ultimate road warrior, a man who has made a career of winning in other men's backyards. And to do that, especially when you're a bleeder who lacks one-punch knockout power, you'd better know what you're doing.

If Zaragoza has his way, we'll see further demonstrations of his mastery before he's through. Half an hour after beating McCullough, he was already campaigning for another payday, another road trip.

"We will go to Dublin if the purse is right," he said of a rematch, an elf-like grin dancing across what seemed, on that night, anyway, the most beautiful face in boxing. ■

Oscar De La Hoya

(Continued from page 42)

The last knock on De La Hoya—that he looks more like a model than a fighter—may have been eliminated by the Gonzalez fight. While the mega-tough Mexican showed no apparent facial damage following his beating, he nonetheless showed up at the postfight press conference wearing the requisite dark sunglasses. De La Hoya, on the other hand, came in sans shades, holding an ice pack on his left eye.

When asked if he was intentionally displaying the blemish to his critics, De La Hoya pointed to his face and proudly said, "This is what boxing is all about."

In actuality, no one in the De La Hoya camp had any sunglasses for the fighter to wear.

"I usually carry two or three pairs in my grip," said cutman Chuck Bodak. "But I just couldn't find them afterward."

Be assured, Team De La Hoya will

have extra pairs for the Whitaker fight. But don't expect Oscar to need them. ■

Mark Jacobs is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

New Faces

(Continued from page 16)

January, with Casamayor and Garbey staying with Main Events.

By then, Casamayor, a junior lightweight who was looking to drop down to featherweight, was 4-0 (3). In September, he turned pro by knocking out David Chamendis in Miami. Next came a four-round decision over Oscar Gonzalez. In December, Casamayor scored his second first-round knockout, stopping Roberto Sierra cold on the Riddick Bowe-Andrew Golota II undercard. In his fourth pro start, he bombed Vidal Padilla in one round in Puerto Rico.

Casamayor was a 70-pound sparkplug when he began his boxing career at the age of eight in his hometown of Guantanamo. Over the next 17 years, he amassed an incredible record of 330-30, winning virtually every Cuban boxing title, as well as numerous gold, silver, and bronze medals for the Cuban national team in international competition. While an amateur, he defeated the likes of Junior Jones and Wayne McCullough, the latter by a 17-2 decision.

But the victories, medals, and trophies didn't come close to compensating for the lifestyle that Casamayor once illustrated by pouring a cup of water over his head and indicating that he was taking a shower. Nor was Casamayor happy with his boxing coach, Alcides Segarra, a taskmaster who, it has been suggested, relies on a reign of terror to keep his boxers in line. Still, the decision to defect did have its drawbacks. Casamayor left behind his ailing mother and a four-year-old daughter.

In joining Team Freedom, Casamayor, 25, has entered into a new family. DeCubas, who has worked with many Latin fighters over the years, including Roberto Duran, has put together a team of what has become a refuge for Cuban defectors. In all, there are 13 Cubans in the stable. Most of them are based in Miami, living in the same apartment complex and working out in the same gym. Among the Team Freedom members are unbeaten welterweight Mario Inbarren, undefeated cruiserweight Eheler Castillo, and two-time former world amateur champion Ramon LeDon, a lightweight. Of the 13 fighters, 12 were members of the Cuban National Team at one time or another. All have asked for political asylum within the past five years.

Casamayor appears to have all that it will take to parlay his newfound freedom into a splendid professional career. He can box and move, and he has fast hands and power.

"This kid reminds me of Wilfredo Gomez," says Pintor. "He has so much talent. So far, he's done excellent."

So far. While Casamayor indeed has all the tools, there remain questions that can be applied to all the Cubans. As amateurs, they have an awesome reputation. As pros? No reputation exists, thanks in part to overhyped heavyweight Jorge Luis Gonzalez, the one-time amateur star who bombed out against Riddick Bowe and Tim Witherspoon.

The 5'7" Casamayor has never gone more than four rounds. Another question: Can he deal with the variety of pro styles he will face? And will he be able to keep his freedom in perspective and remain focused on his career?

"The Cuban boxing situation is really intriguing," says Main Events' Duva. "Not just the politics of it, but now we have to find out if they can adjust to the professional style. We know they have always been good amateurs. But can they adjust? Going from three rounds to 10 or 12 is a big adjustment, mentally and physically. And can they adjust to the lifestyle? There are so many luxuries here. They have to be careful not to get caught up in all that."

However, Duva adds, "Casamayor seems to be adjusting very well. We're very excited about him."

"The Cubans are well-schooled," adds USA Network boxing analyst Sean O'Grady. "They have a real reputation in the amateurs. As pros, though, they don't. This kid certainly has his work cut out for him."

Pintor, for one, is convinced Casamayor will not have trouble adjusting. "This kid takes care of himself," says the trainer. "In fact, he's adapting faster than I thought he would. When he works out, he *works*. He is very anxious to become a world champion and make some money. It's just a matter of how fast he can get used to the professional styles. As a four-round fighter, he's already something else. Getting up to six, eight, 10, or 12 rounds will be no problem for him because he likes to work."

Of course, Casamayor has incentive to do well. The Cuban realizes success in the ring breeds prosperity. "I have to work hard so that I can make money," says Casamayor, who never owned a car until buying a brand new red Isuzu Trooper with his first pro paycheck.

Casamayor isn't intent on making money just for his own means. He has set up one savings account for a specific purpose. "If I make money, I can get my family out of Cuba," he says.

All the money in the world may not make that happen, at least while Castro is in charge. But now that Casamayor is living in freedom, he can do all the dreaming he wants—and without fear of retribution. ■

Dan Hirshberg is a freelance writer based in Hackettstown, New Jersey.

Fitz-Corbett

(Continued from page 23)

Corbett, who had won the title by knocking out John L. Sullivan in September 1892, hadn't defended since scoring a third-round knockout of Charley Mitchell in January 1894. He had boxed an exhibition that September against Peter Courtney, noteworthy because Thomas Edison filmed it for later showing in his Kinetoscope nickelodeon parlors around the country.

Fitz had been middleweight titlist since stopping Nonpareil Jack Dempsey in January 1891. He had defended just once, opting instead to fight heavyweights, and had been challenging Corbett for several years. In March 1892, at the same Olympic Club in New Orleans where Corbett would defeat Sullivan six months later, Fitz stopped Irish heavyweight Peter Maher in 12 rounds. Following Fitz' victories over Joe Godfrey, Jem Hall, and Dan Creedon, Stuart matched him with Corbett for a bout in Dallas on October 31, 1895. When the match was blocked by hurriedly passed anti-boxing legislation, Stuart made another attempt, this time scheduling a bout in Hot Springs, Arkansas, on November 3. The authorities there were no more tolerant of prize fighting, then still illegal in most states, than they had been in Dallas. The bout was called off, and soon afterward, a disgusted Corbett announced his retirement.

Corbett then did something he had no right to do: He designated Maher as his suc-

cessor, largely due to Maher's first-round knockout of Steve O'Donnell, a Corbett sparring partner, the previous month. A chagrined Fitz promptly challenged Maher to a rematch. Slated for El Paso, Texas, the bout finally took place in February 1896, in the Mexican desert just across the Rio Grande. Fitz destroyed Maher's championship illusions by flattening him in 95 seconds.

Fitz' claim to the title, however, received scant acceptance. Corbett promptly unretired; that June he boxed a four-round draw with unbeaten Tom Sharkey. Eager as ever to fight Corbett, Fitz challenged Sharkey, and the two were matched for December 1896 in San Francisco.

Sharkey, a short, barrel-chested ex-sailor, won the early rounds by pounding away at Fitz' body. Fitz, balding, freckled, and spindly-legged, but also a tremendous puncher, began scoring effectively in the sixth, and in the eighth, a left to the body floored Sharkey for the count. Instead of raising Fitz' hand in victory, however, referee Wyatt Earp, either possessed of remarkably poor eyesight or bribed by gamblers, declared Sharkey the winner on a foul.

Martin Julian, Fitz' manager, protested Earp's decision in court. The verdict stood. Regardless, two weeks after the controversial bout, Corbett and his manager, Bill Brady, met Fitz, Julian, and promoter Stuart at New York's Bartholdi Hotel. Corbett agreed to defend the title against Fitz on March 17, 1897, at a site to be later chosen by Stuart. The two would battle to a finish under Marquis of Queensberry rules, and with five-ounce gloves.

Stuart had both fighters' signatures on a contract, but he still needed a venue. Aware that the Nevada state legislature was soon to vote on a bill that, if passed, would legalize boxing in the state, the promoter traveled to Carson City to discuss the matter with the governor. The bill passed, effective January 1, 1897. Shortly afterward, Stuart announced that Corbett-Fitzsimmons would take place in Carson City.

The fight would be noteworthy for a number of firsts. It headlined the first professional fight card in Nevada, and it would be the first title fight to be held in an arena specially constructed for boxing. Stuart had picked a logical site—in the middle of a racetrack less than half a mile from the heart of the city. The promoter was nothing if not optimistic: When completed, the arena was large enough to seat 25,000 fans.

Corbett-Fitzsimmons would also be the first fight to be filmed by a motion picture camera. Pleased by the interest in his Kinetoscope film of Corbett-Courtney three years earlier, Edison signed Corbett to an exclusive contract (the first in motion picture history) with his Kinetoscope Exhibition Company.

Edison sent Enoch. J. Rector to Carson City to film the bout. Rector would use a Veriscope, a 38mm motion picture camera built especially for filming outdoors. The camera operators would work from a large, enclosed wooden booth positioned several rows back from ringside. Rector would expose more than 11,000 feet of film for the bout, a then-record for the longest film of a single event. Despite Rector's work, it would be Edison whose name would be forever linked with the bout. Zealously protecting his work, Edison had the inscription "COPYRIGHTED THE VERISCOPE COMPANY 1897" placed on the edge of the ring apron. It was clearly visible both at the fight and later, when the films were shown in theaters across the country.

Both fighters set up training camps in the nearby Sierra Nevada mountains. Corbett worked out at Shaw's Springs under the watchful eye of Billy Delaney, who trained him over the course of his entire career. Delaney brought in additional help, hiring Charlie White of New York, well-known both as a referee and a shrewd judge of fighters' styles. Brady also summoned a 21-year-old heavyweight prospect from the Los Angeles area to work out and spar with Corbett. The young hopeful, a 6'2", 210-pound bear of a man, was highly regarded despite having had just three pro fights. His name was James J. Jeffries, and he'd provide Corbett with all the work he would need.

Fitz trained nearby at Cook's Grove. Julian brought in Ernst Roeber to wrestle with Fitz to help him build up his strength. The challenger ran anywhere from 10 to 15 miles a day. It was on one of his running excursions that he encountered Corbett just days before the bout. He was about a mile away from his camp, running along the road that led to the Nevada State Penitentiary, when he saw Corbett, who was accompanied by Delaney, White, and Jeffries. Dan Hickey, one of Fitz' trainers, and a sparring partner named Yarum stepped forward to shake hands with the members of Corbett's party. When Fitz, a smile on his face, approached his opponent with hand outstretched, Corbett refused to reciprocate.

"I'll shake hands with you over there," he said, pointing to the arena in the distance, "after I've licked you."

Embarrassed and angry, Fitz calmly said, "Then we'll never shake."

When Corbett replied, "You don't think you can lick me?" Fitz laughed at him. Additional words were exchanged until Delaney, sensing that tempers were beginning to flare, separated them.

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St. Patrick's Day in Carson City was clear, blue, cloudless, and hot. The Battle of the Century, as it was publicized around the country, drew the likes of John L. Sullivan, covering the bout—with the help of a ghostwriter—for the New York *World*, and Sharkey, there to challenge the winner. Special trains brought fans from San Francisco and Reno, while cattlemen and cowboys rode in on horseback. Miners came down from the Sierras, while Native Americans walked in from nearby reservations. Despite the ideal weather, Stuart would not come anywhere near a sellout; the attendance may have exceeded 5,000, but not by much. The gate was $22,000, of which $16,500 went to the fighters' purses. (There was also a $2,500 side bet between the fighters.)

At about 10:30 a.m., those already in the stands saw featherweight Dal Hawkins knock out Martin Flaherty in the first round. That bout was followed by the matchup between Mysterious Billy Smith and George "Young Corbett" Green. Smith, who in his previous five fights had drawn twice and lost three times on fouls, hoped a win would lead him to another shot at the welterweight title, which he had held from 1892 to '94. Instead, he absorbed a beating for 12 rounds, at which point, with his left arm broken and his face battered, his corner threw in the towel. (Smith appeared finished, but he would regain the vacant welterweight title the following year.)

Fitz entered the ring just before noon. He was not yet 34, but his receding hairline and pale complexion made him appear older. His disproportionate frame—thin legs offset by the massive shoulder and back muscles he'd honed as a blacksmith's apprentice in New Zealand—made him appear, as Sullivan once described, "a fighting machine on

stilts." Just under 6', Fitz' weight was given as 167 pounds. But earlier that morning, just before the fighter left for the arena, Bob Davis, covering the bout for the New York *Journal*, and an unofficial member of Fitz' camp, saw the challenger weighed on a steelyard scale. As Davis would later write, "We weighed Bob stripped ... He tipped the scale at exactly 156½ pounds."

Moments later, Corbett climbed into the ring to the cheers of the crowd. Standing 6'1" and weighing 183, his hair brushed back in a fashionable pompadour, Corbett, 30, looked every bit the matinee idol he in fact was. (Brady had featured Corbett as the star of several plays, including *Gentleman Jack* and *The Naval Cadet*.) Gamblers, remembering Corbett's defeat of Sullivan 4½ years before, made Corbett a 10-6 favorite. As Corbett stood in his corner, Fitz stared across the ring at him.

Referee George Siler of Chicago, perhaps the best-known third man in the country, called the fighters to the center of the ring for their final instructions. They refused to shake hands, but agreed to pose standing next to one another and facing Edison's Veriscope camera. Corbett, wearing a gray robe, his hands on his hips, grinned as Fitz, standing to the champion's right, looked down and frowned, his hands in the pockets of his Japanese bathrobe. The two then returned to their respective corners and removed their robes before being gloved.

Corbett's trunks were olive green breeches, short enough to reveal a bit of his behind. Fitz' were more conservative, dark blue with white breeches underneath that extended several inches beyond his outer trunks. Corbett wore no belt. Fitz' trunks, however, were girded by a wide belt with a design emblematic of the American flag; the challenger, English-born but raised in New Zealand, had recently taken out his naturalization papers to become a U.S. citizen.

At the bell for round one, Corbett glided with the grace of a dancer, boxing on his toes, left hand extended, right hand in blocking position just below his chin. Fitz moved forward, hoping to score to the body, but the elusive Corbett either kept him on the end of his jab or ducked punches, then countered with unerring accuracy. Looking as if he hadn't fought in only three months, and not three years, Corbett won the round decisively.

Corbett won the second, too, working Fitz over in a corner late in the round, then scoring with two successive hooks to the stomach just before the bell. Fitz tried to rally in the third and fourth, but Corbett would catch him coming in, then tie him up before the challenger could land any punches. Late in the round, Corbett, startlingly quick for a heavyweight, followed a right to the body with two lefts to the chin. "His speed was incredible," Fitz would later say, "I never believed any man could hit me as often as Corbett did."

In the fifth, Corbett stood toe-to-toe with Fitz for much of the round. The challenger was finally able to land to Corbett's body, but the champion unloaded a left-right that drew blood from Fitz' nose. Corbett scored repeatedly with his left to Fitz' face, then landed a right to the jaw. Hurt, Fitz fought back gamely, but by round's end, blood flowed from both his nose and mouth.

In the sixth, Corbett continued, drawing more blood with his jab, then snapping Fitz' head back with a right uppercut. Desperate, Fitz tried a right to the head, but Corbett easily avoided the blow, then unloaded a terrific right to the chin that floored Fitz. Breathing heavily, blood all over his face, Fitz looked incapable of beating referee Siler's count. Somehow, he arose at nine. Corbett resumed his attack, and a wobbly Fitz somehow survived to hear the bell.

As Fitz wearily dragged himself back to his corner, ringside bettors were now offering 10 to 4 on Corbett. But they were neglecting one variable in this ringside drama: Fitz' recuperative powers. Gasping for breath, ministered to by Julian and Hickey, and encouraged by his wife, Rose, Fitz answered the bell for the seventh, and despite the beating he had absorbed up to that point, continued to pressure Corbett. Both had slowed somewhat, but Corbett countered Fitz well enough to win the round. In the eighth, however, Fitz ducked underneath a right and landed a solid left to the midsection that made Corbett wince. He did even better in the ninth, scoring with lefts to the face, then working the body. The challenger followed with a strong 10th, connecting with rights to both the head and body. At the bell, Corbett, seemingly en route to a knockout victory just four rounds before, looked exhausted.

In the 11th, Fitz pounded Corbett's midsection, but the champion fired back, drawing more blood. Corbett began the 12th with a left-right to the head, and Fitz responded with a right of his own. Seemingly enjoying a second wind, Corbett landed freely with his jab, but Fitz continued punching to the body with success.

In the 13th, Fitz' pressure was throwing Corbett's timing off; he'd gun to the body, then to the head, moving the champion to the ropes while disregarding any counters. Fitz landed a right to the mouth that knocked loose one of Corbett's gold teeth, sending it bouncing off the canvas and into the front row. At the bell, however, Corbett walked confidently to his corner. It was still anyone's fight.

Corbett began the 14th by catching Fitz coming in with two strong lefts to the mouth. Fitz then shook Corbett with a right to the ear, followed by several more blows to the face. Corbett, however, remained alert, trying to figure the challenger's next move so that he might counterpunch.

Then came the punch heard 'round the world.

As Corbett moved in to throw a hook, Fitz feinted with his right, then shifted so that his right foot was in front of his left. In an instant, he unloaded a tremendous left to the pit of the stomach, followed by a left to the jaw.

The wind taken out of him, his legs collapsing beneath him, Corbett sank slowly to the canvas, a stunned, pained look on his face. He tried to catch his breath, tried to rise, but could only crawl on the canvas near the ropes, supported by his right glove and knee as Siler counted. At eight, Corbett desperately grabbed for the ropes, missed, then fell on his face as timekeeper William Muldoon announced, "Ten and out!"

The time was 1:40 of the round. Bob Fitzsimmons was the new heavyweight champion of the world.

As Julian waved a towel in jubilation, Corbett, having regained both breath and footing, charged angrily across the ring where Fitz stood in his corner, waving two miniature American flags toward the audience. Despite the efforts of Brady and White, Corbett struck Fitz from behind, knocking him underneath the bottom rope. As his cornermen restrained Corbett, Fitz, more surprised than hurt, was assisted back to his stool by his seconds. Moments later, everyone at ringside heard the official announcement from referee Siler: "Fitzsimmons wins."

Still in shock from the loss of his title,

Corbett walked over to Fitz and demanded, "You've got to fight me again! I'm entitled to another chance!"

Fitz extended his right hand, which Corbett shook, as he told the now ex-champion, "I am through with the ring."

"If you don't fight me," Corbett replied, "I will go at you in the street."

Fitz' response was blunt: "If you ever lay a hand on me, I'll kill you. Our book is closed."

Shortly after, a weeping Corbett told reporters, "I'm not licked ... This is a tough deal, to be counted out over a sneaking little punch."

Hearing Corbett's complaint, Fitz replied, "It was not a sneaking little punch. I planned it. It was the same punch I hit Tom Sharkey with in San Francisco. Only the referee there was a ... " He allowed his listeners to decide upon a suitable expletive.

Posterity would remember Fitz' title-winning punch with considerably more respect and dignity than did Corbett. Talking soon after his victory, the new champion described the blow to Bob Davis as a "left-hand shift on his wind," but Davis would later hear Dr. John Gardner, a physician at ringside, describe the knockout punch as a blow to the solar plexus. From that point on, Fitz' left to the stomach would be remembered as "the solar plexus punch."

Across the country, the next morning's papers told of Fitz' winning punch. Many also carried a story under Fitz' name in which he announced his decision to retire from the ring. It seemed a bit strange for the new heavyweight champion of the world to make such an announcement on the day of his greatest triumph, even when one considered that he had been fighting professionally since 1880. Regardless, most observers took him at his word, even though he continued to be recognized as champion.

After spending much of the next two years appearing as the blacksmith hero of a stage melodrama—Fitz often followed a performance by making horseshoes to give away to his fans—the champion finally agreed to defend the title, but not against Corbett. Instead, in June 1899, in Coney Island, Fitz, 36, faced Corbett's former sparring partner, Jeffries. Down early, Fitz fought back courageously, but the younger, stronger Jeffries absorbed the champion's best punches before knocking him out in 11 rounds to win the title. In a San Francisco rematch in July 1902, Jeffries kayoed Fitz in eight rounds.

In November 1903, Fitz became boxing's first three-division champion when, at age 40, he took a 20-round decision and the light heavyweight title from George Gardner. Despite losing the title to Philadelphia Jack O'Brien in 1905, Fitz continued fighting until 1914, when he finally retired at age 51.

In October 1917, Fitz, in Chicago to fulfill a stage engagement, died of pneumonia at age 54.

Corbett finally got an opportunity to regain the title three years after his loss to Fitz. In May 1900, he faced Jeffries in Coney Island. Boxing brilliantly, Corbett led after 20 rounds, but Jeffries came on to knock him out in the 23rd round. After being stopped by Jeffries in 10 rounds in August 1903, Corbett hung up his gloves.

In addition to achieving considerable success on stage, Corbett published his autobiography, *The Roar Of The Crowd*, in 1925. On February 18, 1933, the former champion, 66, died of cancer in Bayside, New York.

Fitzsimmons-Corbett, the first of what would be hundreds of title fights in Nevada, remains a century later the only championship bout, heavyweight or otherwise, hosted by Carson City. In front of a fire station in the capital city is a plaque dedicated by the Nevada State Historical Society. It designates the station as being near the site of the arena that hosted Fitzsimmons-Corbett.

If you stand in front of the station and look off into the distance, you can see the Sierra Nevada mountains, filmed a century ago by Edison's Veriscope movie camera. The mountains offered a fitting backdrop as Fitzsimmons and Corbett, battling for the heavyweight championship of the world, inaugurated boxing in Nevada 100 years ago. ■

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Junior Jones

(Continued from page 25)

rounds. But then he wilted. When he was knocked out, we had the contractual right for a rematch. But Junior decided he could no longer make weight, and we went up to 122 pounds."

The loss was a shock to Jones—he'd never been stopped before—and Fariello didn't make it any easier.

"Joe was a tough disciplinarian," said Gittelsohn, "and he was telling Junior that weight wasn't the problem. Joe thought it was a complex head problem—that Junior had not established himself against Johnson, and had let himself be outhustled and outfought.

"Joe thought Junior was the strongest bantamweight he'd ever seen, even stronger than Jeff Chandler, and he wanted Junior to establish himself as a physical presence. He also felt Junior was such a hard puncher that he could take anybody out. That night, according to Joe, Junior had taken the easy way out—dancing and scoring from the outside. Joe never really agreed the weight was an issue."

Fariello's viewpoint became an issue to the fighter.

"At that point, Junior was upset that he lost the title and upset about his fall from grace," said Gittelsohn. "And Joe and he parted company."

George Benton was brought in to work with Jones for the Pinckney fight.

"I went with George Benton for all the wrong reasons," said Jones. "I was trying to blame others, like Joe. And not myself. I was still mentally distraught from the Johnson fight. Still mentally messed up. I figured I'd take the Pinckney fight and people will forget the Johnson fight. Well, it didn't turn out that way."

In the third round, Pinckney landed an overhand right that dropped Jones. Jones got up and fought back. But as Gittelsohn recalled, "They clinched and fell to the canvas together. The referee separated them, then halted the fight ... prematurely, I thought, and gave the fight to Pinckney. Although Junior had clearly been hurt, he was ready to resume. But that was that. We were history."

At that point, it seemed as though Jones' career was history.

"I was 100 percent convinced I would not fight anymore," said Jones, recalling his depression following the Pinckney bout. "I just didn't want to fight. I decided I was financially okay. And while I knew it wouldn't last forever, I just couldn't see going back to the ring. See, I was confused, trying to figure out what went wrong, why all of a sudden I was performing so badly.

I'd been champion of the world, and now it seemed like I couldn't even fight."

One night at his home in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, as he thought about his ring misfortunes, he broke down and cried in front of his wife, Yvonne.

Recalled Jones, "She asked, 'What's wrong?' I told her, 'I can't even wake up and look in the mirror and tell myself I'm the best pound-for-pound fighter.' The problem wasn't Joe ... or Gary. It was me. My lack of training hard. People write about you. You mistakenly think you're the guy in the clippings."

He was ready to go back to boxing, but he understood he had no margin for error. His career was at a crossroads—one more loss and he'd be finished.

"Was I scared?" Jones said. "Yeah, I was. One more loss and I'd have to get a job. I'd never had a job. I'd always been a boxer. Put me in the work force, I don't know what to do." Once he resolved to return to boxing, Jones paid a visit to Fariello.

"Joe was training [IBF featherweight champion] Boom Boom Johnson," said Jones. "I told him I'd like to come back with him—that I *thought* I'd left him for the right reasons, but ...

"Joe told me, 'I've got to be honest with you. I don't think you're the same fighter you used to be. If, within four months, I don't see improvement, I'm not going to train you. I don't want to see you get hurt. I'll tell you, "Get a job."

"It hurt to hear him say that. To myself, I said, 'Damn, I can't believe it.' But probably it was the best thing he could have said, 'cause he was 100 percent right. I *was* a different fighter. I was getting hit more. I wasn't using the jab as much. I was trying too many powerpunches, and dropping my hands when I threw them. I had become very predictable. The mistakes I used to get away with, I wasn't getting away with anymore. I had to be honest with myself and realize I hadn't appreciated being champion the way I should have."

In the days after Fariello agreed to return as Jones' trainer, he had the fighter spar with Boom Boom Johnson. Jones' confidence grew from his workouts with the IBF champion. Meanwhile, Gittelsohn plotted the fighter's future.

"We had to reinvent Junior," he said, "and not by protecting him, but by matching him against formidable opposition. In the gym, his performance was unbelievable. He was knocking guys out all the time. It became harder to find sparring partners."

In 1995, Jones would fight five bouts, winning each time. But as Gittelsohn said, "Because of the fickleness of the business, he was not being acknowledged. That was because of the [two] losses."

When the chance was presented to fight former champion Orlando Canizales in March 1996, Jones happily agreed to the match, hoping a victory would put him back in the boxing spotlight. By now, Fariello was gone—he had died of a heart attack several months before. Tommy Brooks was training Jones.

Jones' 12-round decision over Canizales was impressive, but it didn't bring the fanfare the fighter's camp had hoped for.

"We thought," said Gittelsohn, "we had climbed back to the top of the mountain. But to be honest, I was very disappointed with the sparse press about the fight. When Junior didn't get that star recognition, a change came over him. He became very hardened. He was angry ... and intensely focused. Almost on a daily basis, he begged me to get him a match with Barrera because everybody thought Barrera was invincible, a superstar. And Junior felt he could beat him.

"I thought I could get Junior a title fight against the IBF junior featherweight champion, Vuyani Bungu, and get Junior a title. But he would say, 'What good is that? I could beat him and get a title, and nobody will be talking about me. I want to beat the best.'"

Jones was not daunted by the prevailing sentiment that Barrera was too much fighter for him.

"People would notice me in malls in Houston and Virginia Beach, where I trained, and would ask who I was fighting," he said. "When I said Barrera, they'd get this look, like 'poor guy,' and say, 'Oh, he's tough. Good luck.'

"I could sense they didn't believe I would win. My younger brother Brandon—same thing. I asked him, 'What do you think about the Barrera fight?' And he'd say, ' ... I don't know. The kid's good.' The guys in Gleason's Gym, where I'd trained for other fights, were saying they couldn't see me lasting past the sixth

(Continued on page 58)

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Junior Jones

(Continued from page 57)

round. When Barrera beat Kennedy McKinney, Gil Clancy as commentator said, 'No one in the division can beat him.' They forgot all about Junior Jones."

Jones studied the tape of Barrera's classic war against McKinney and decided the Mexican could be hit, and hurt, with a straight right hand. He was convinced that his punch would do what McKinney's hadn't—destroy Barrera.

He trained in the same camp as Evander Holyfield, who was preparing for his challenge of Mike Tyson. (Holyfield and Jones shared the same trainer in Brooks.) Holyfield told 8-1 underdog Jones, "Odds are just the public's opinion. Respect your own opinion."

Jones did just that; he parlayed a confident outlook with a right hand that changed his world.

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Early into the new year, Jones was driving around in his new Pathfinder, a perk that resulted from the $20,000 bonus Gittelsohn gave the fighter after the Barrera bout. (Jones' purse was $350,000.)

The future figures to be even more lucrative. HBO was talking multifight deal. Gittelsohn was mulling opponents, while Team Barrera's aim, it was clear, was to secure a rematch.

Prior to the Barrera match, which was fought for the lightly regarded WBO title, Gittelsohn had developed a distrust of WBO President Francisco (Paco) Valcarcel when they differed over the selection of judges, one of whom the manager regarded as overly friendly to the Barrera camp.

While that particular judge was eventually replaced, Gittelsohn's suspicions about the WBO intensified when, he said, Valcarcel tried to persuade him to sign a deal that would have given Barrera's Los Angeles-based promoter, John Jackson of Forum Boxing, options on Jones in the event the challenger beat Barrera. Gittelsohn told Valcarcel that such matters were outside the WBO president's jurisdiction, and came away from the encounter more firmly convinced that the deck was loaded against his fighter.

(In response to Gittelsohn's comments regarding the selection of judges, Valcarcel told THE RING, "I never allow anybody to veto any official. It's not a good policy to have them tell you which official they want." And regarding the manager's allegation concerning a deal between Jones and Forum Boxing, he said, "In talking to Gittelsohn [regarding option agreements], I was trying to save the fight.")

The fact that all three judges had Barrera ahead at the time of the stoppage, and that the WBO later ordered that Jones' next bout be against Barrera (within 120 days from their original bout) strengthened Gittelsohn's conviction and led him to say at the start of the new year, "HBO has assured us that they couldn't care less if Junior has the WBO title. I'm not going to allow the WBO to dictate to us. They didn't give us a fair shake in November. And I intend to do what's best for Junior. He deserves it. He's overcome so much adversity, including the WBO.

"He wanted to regain his lost celebrity more than anything else. He's regained everything he lost, and wanted. Having felt bitter about losing it, it's not likely he's going to give it up soon. He's tasted the bitter and the sweet."

The 26-year-old Jones, meanwhile, said he hoped to unify the junior featherweight title and then do the same in the featherweight division.

"Then I'll stop," he said.

On the long road back, the view was all blue skies. ■

Phil Berger is an author and freelance writer based in New York City.

Unification

(Continued from page 29)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Semifinals:

Orzubek Nazarov vs. Jean-Baptiste Mendy

Nazarov stalks Mendy, who tries to jab and move against the left-handed slugger. The stoic Nazarov works the body and head in spurts and takes round one. The second appears as if it's going to be more of the same when Nazarov tags Mendy with a left to the head. Mendy takes another shot as he collapses. The Frenchman makes it to a sitting position but no further as the fight ends with shocking suddenness at the 2:04 mark. Nazarov by kayo in round two.

Semifinals:

Phillip Holiday vs. Steve Johnston

Rugged IBF king Holiday tries to use his blitzkrieg tactics in the first, throwing more than 100 punches, but landing only 28 percent. Johnston, meanwhile, eschews his power and sticks and moves. For five rounds, he lands almost half his punches, producing cuts and swelling on the face of the South African. Holiday's aggressiveness and volume punching keeps him in the fight. In the 10th, Johnston scores a flash knockdown when he catches Holiday rushing in. With the steam gone from Holiday's punches, Johnston slugs it out in the 11th and 12th. The scoring: 116-112 Johnston, 117-111 Johnston, and 114-114. Johnston by majority decision.

Championship Match:

Orzubek Nazarov vs. Steve Johnston

It's cat-and-mouse for the first four rounds, with neither fighter gaining an edge. In the fifth, Johnston puts Nazarov on his seat for a four-count. Nazarov rebounds in rounds six through nine. In the 10th, however, Johnston begins to assert his hand speed, and he cuts the Russian over the right eye. Entering the 12th, Johnston appears in control when Nazarov lands a big right that puts his opponent down. Johnston is back on his feet at the count of eight and avoids trouble for the last minute of the fight. The decision: 116-113 Johnston, 115-113 Nazarov, and 115-113 Johnston. Johnston by split decision. **Undisputed Champion: Steve Johnston.**

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Semifinals:

Wilfredo Vazquez vs. Tom Johnson

Johnson snaps his jab into the face of the advancing Vazquez and ties up the veteran on the inside. Adding an occasional powerpunch to the mix, Johnson dictates the pace and forces Vazquez to fight on the American's terms. Through two-thirds of the bout, Johnson is in complete command. In the ninth, however, Vazquez catches him with several staggering punches, but Johnson holds on, and in the 10th resumes dominance. Vazquez fails to conjure a miracle in the last two rounds, and the workmanlike Johnson comes close to dropping his foe in the 12th. The scoring: 117-110 Johnson and 116-112 Johnson (twice). Johnson by unanimous decision.

Semifinals:

Luisito Espinosa vs. Naseem Hamed

Hamed comes out quickly, and the unorthodox lefty baffles Espinosa, easily taking the first two rounds. Espinosa recovers ground when he flattens a careless Hamed with a hook in the third. Hamed rises at four and Espinosa hammers him with combinations. Hamed boxes with flash but little care until the seventh. In that round, he hurts Espinosa and half-pushes, half-punches the Filipino to the canvas. It's all Hamed through the 10th. In the 11th, Espinosa mounts a comeback, stunning the Englishman during a brisk exchange. In the 12th, Hamed floors a fatigued Espinosa early, and when he plants him a second time, the fight is halted. Hamed by TKO in round 12.

Championship Match:

Tom Johnson vs. Naseem Hamed

A lackluster start by Hamed allows Johnson to punch to the body and build an early points lead. In the fifth, Johnson staggers Hamed. The Prince rallies in the seventh and cuts Johnson above the right eye. Hamed continues his attack in the eighth, but Johnson bounces back strongly in the ninth. Knowing he's behind on the cards, Hamed lays it out in the 10th, and although he wins the round handily, Johnson weathers the assault. With Hamed appearing fatigued, Johnson turns the fight in the 11th. Both fighters spend the 12th doing more clinching than fighting. The cards: 115-112 Johnson (twice) and 115-111 Johnson. Johnson by unanimous decision. **Undisputed Champion: Tom Johnson.**

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Semifinals:

Daorung (Chuwatana) Siriwat vs. Sirimongkol Singmanasuk

Siriwat squares off against his precocious countryman in round one, intent on using his experience against Singmanasuk's youthful aggression. Siriwat scores with frequency and absorbs the less frequent but harder shots delivered by his opponent. Siriwat builds a slight lead in a rather mundane bout. Singmanasuk appears more fatigued than the much older Siriwat and is completely outboxed over the last two frames. No surprise in the scoring: 116-111 Siriwat, 116-112 Siriwat, and 115-113 Siriwat. Siriwat by unanimous decision.

Semifinals:

Mbulelo Botile vs. Jorge Eliecer Julio

Master Blaster Julio comes out looking to unload on Botile, but the South African blocks or evades the rushes and counters with stinging hooks and crosses. After three rounds, Julio is bleeding from the nose and mouth. Botile's punches prove to be harder than they look. Julio comes back in the seventh, when he finally lands his right and floors Botile for an eight-count. The South African survives until the bell. Julio easily takes the ninth, but Botile resumes his mastery in the 10th, coasts through the 11th, and dominates the 12th. The scores: 117-111 Botile, 116-112 Botile, and 116-111 Botile. Botile by unanimous decision.

Championship Match:

Daorung Siriwat vs. Mbulelo Botile

The first six rounds appeal only to purists as Siriwat and Botile match wits. Botile's slightly better powerpunching gives him a narrow edge at the halfway point. Botile picks up the pace in the seventh and hurts Siriwat with a four-punch combination at the bell. In the ninth and 10th, Siriwat elects to trade and surprisingly comes out ahead. Both fighters take off the 11th. In the 12th, Botile puts on a boxing clinic, and with only six seconds remaining, he drops Siriwat for a four-count. The scores: 114-114 and 115-113 Botile (twice). Botile by majority decision. **Undisputed Champion: Mbulelo Botile.**

FLYWEIGHTS

Semifinals:

Mark Johnson vs. Jose Bonilla

The slick-boxing Bonilla's strengths are his elusiveness and combination-punching. He discovers—to his dismay—that Johnson not only can duplicate these skills, but adds punching power to the mix. After two rounds of sparring, Johnson starts to walk through Bonilla's punches and land damaging shots of his own. In the third, the American knocks Bonilla to the canvas for a six-count, then floors him a second time only moments later to end the fight. Johnson by kayo in round three.

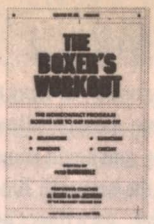
Semifinals:

Yuri Arbachakov vs. Alberto Jimenez

Jimenez comes out blasting with both hands and stuns Arbachakov by scoring a flash knockdown late in the second. Arbachakov battles back gallantly and boxes

(Continued on page 60)

"The total effect is a ★ KNOCKOUT." ★
Publisher's Weekly



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★ GRANT

Unification

(Continued from page 59)

and slugs equally well during the next three rounds to climb back into the fight. Jimenez continues to bomb away and again stuns the undefeated Russian in the seventh. Jimenez begins to tire in the eighth. As a direct result, Arbachakov has his best round thus far, battering the Mexican. The last third of the fight finds an active Arbachakov outpunching a stubborn Jimenez. The bout goes to the cards. Scores: 114-113 Jimenez, 115-113 Arbachakov, and 115-112 Arbachakov. Arbachakov by split decision.

Championship Match:
Mark Johnson vs. Yuri Arbachakov

Johnson relies on his speed and boxing ability to thwart the powerful but somewhat deliberate Arbachakov. By the fourth, Arbachakov is cut badly high on his forehead; Johnson's jab is wreaking havoc on the Russian's face. Arbachakov rallies in the sixth behind a strong body attack, and clearly wins the seventh. In the eighth, Johnson comes off his toes and slugs. In the ninth, Arbachakov is clearly the slower and more battered of the two. Johnson drives him into the ropes in the 10th and buckles his knees in the 11th. Arbachakov makes a gutty charge in the 12th and closes out the fight by outpunching Johnson two to one. The decision: 115-114 Johnson, 115-113 Johnson, and 116-112 Johnson. Johnson by unanimous decision. **Undisputed Champion: Mark Johnson.**

Next month: The eight remaining divisions. ■

Phillip Holiday

(Continued from page 31)

the U.S. before meeting in early-1998.

Despite an unbeaten record that included knockout victories over highly regarded Colombian Miguel Julio and Australian triple-crown champion Jeff Fenech, Holiday was largely an unknown commodity on the international scene. And he was underrated at home, despite the fact that South Africa's president, Nelson Mandela, counts himself as a major-league Holiday fan and has done his best to promote the fighter's stock.

All this changed after the Robinson fight, which was televised by HBO and attended by, among others, Roy Jones and Marvin Hagler. Holiday was matched with a significantly bigger, faster, slicker (and unbeaten) challenger, and Robinson answered the opening bell a slight favorite. But throughout his intense preparations in the USA, Holiday seemed completely unfazed by the ordeal facing him. Interviewed by THE RING in his hotel room the night before the fight, he was his usual relaxed, quiet, courteous self. He showed no hint of doubt that he'd prevail.

The result was an extremely confident performance by the boyish 26-year-old, and one that delighted the moguls of HBO. Beforehand, Lou DiBella, vice president of HBO Sports, said, "I'm told Holiday is the sleeper at 135 pounds, so I'm eager to see him. Bob Yalen (of ABC and ESPN) was telling me he thinks Holiday may be one of the most underrated fighters in the world today."

***

What has been most impressive throughout Holiday's six-year professional career has been his combination of modesty and absolute self-assuredness. Part of this seems to be derived from his fundamentalist religious faith. "I've been given a talent, and I honestly believe that if the Lord wants me to box, and he has given me this talent, I must box," he said. "I'm here because I've got to be a shining light for Him. That's why I've won the world title. It's not because I'm suddenly so great. I've got to give the glory to Lord because He's given me the world title."

The youngest of six children (five boys and one girl), Holiday grew up in a close, comfortable, devoutly Christian family in Benoni. He did reasonably well at school, seldom got into trouble, and avoided street-fights. "At high school, I had one or two people who tried to cause trouble, but I think I had only one fight in school," he recalled. "I was a very quiet person. My sister actually used to call me a nerd. So I wasn't very violent, and I just used to keep to myself."

For the Robinson fight, Holiday was accompanied by a large family delegation, including his father, fraternal twin brother, Paul, and fiancee, Bree. But it is clearly his mother, Joyce, who is the backbone of the clan and the strongest influence on his life. She said that after her son had completed his military service and his draftsman's training, she prayed for days about his desire to box professionally, and was finally given an affirmative answer. As a "Blourokkie" Pentecostal, she is seldom reticent about her faith, and before each fight makes a point of reassuring the perennially nervous Berman that Holiday will win because God has told her so. She did it again for the Robinson fight.

There was a moment immediately after the bout when the victorious champion shouted at security guards blocking Joyce's path into the ring. "That's my mother! I want my mother! I want my mother!" he shouted, an emphatic assessment of his regard for her role in his success.

But Holiday's confidence is also due to his phenomenal physical conditioning and clean living. There are few boxers who can match him in the stamina department. In addition to his twice-a-day, six-times-a-week boxing training, he is a keen amateur cyclist, canoeist, and marathon runner, and participates occasionally in triathlons. "I do the triathlons and cycle races for fun, for enjoyment," he explained, "but at the same time I do it to help me with the boxing. It's great for the cardiovascular system and general fitness, and the cycling works a lot on the legs. When you get to the eighth, 10th round and your legs start to get tired, that's where the cycling helps."

A further dimension to his sense of purpose is his steady improvement as a boxer, particularly regarding defense. In his amateur days, when he was twice South African champion, and early on as a professional, he used to take two blows to land one and rely on his hard jaw.

He served as Brian Mitchell's sparring partner for his countryman's second fight against Tony Lopez (in September 1991). At that stage, he was, like the early version of Mitchell, essentially a two-fisted brawler. But he displayed a burning desire to learn, and despite his aw-shucks modesty, he saw in Mitchell something of a role model—at least in terms of fistic achievement—and was quite clear that his ambition was to follow his mentor by winning a world title.

And like Mitchell, he gradually learned to slip, block, duck, and parry his way in without absorbing an excess of leather.

"After I turned professional," he said, "Harold [Volbrecht] always used to say to me, 'You're early in the boxing game; you've got a lot to learn.' You can't suddenly be the best bob-and-weaver in the country and be able to slip and counter, so we were happy with my progress, even though some people complained I was taking too

many punches. I've always worked with my defense, and I'm trying to improve it further because I don't want to be one of those guys who, in 10, 15 years time, you can hardly talk to and have a conversation with. It's been a big aim of mine to be a more defensive boxer, and I think you could see the results against Robinson, even though there's still some work to be done there."

Holiday said he absorbed a great deal by sparring thousands of rounds with Mitchell, a former WBA and IBF junior lightweight champion. "Through training with him all the time, I could only learn from that and pick up different moves from him," he said. "Brian was a fantastic boxer, and I was wanting to learn as much as I could, so anything he did I'd try in the gym, and that's how it came into my style."

Holiday's early career showed steady but unspectacular development, and he was not generally considered to be in the same league as the likes of lightweight countrymen Dingaan Thobela and Jan Bergman. In his sixth fight, he was dropped from a huge right delivered by Simon Thobejane, but was up immediately and bounced back to win. Since then, he has never come close to being put down.

In January 1993, he made his first foray to the USA, scoring an eighth-round stoppage of Verdell Smith. Soon after, he briefly dropped down to junior lightweight and raked up easy wins over Britain's Harry Escott, Mike Juarez, former world champion Sugar Baby Rojas, Jorge Palomares, and Robert Giepart. The problem was that his power seemed to have evaporated at the lighter weight, and the decision was made to return him to 135 pounds, despite the fact that, at a slight and short-armed 5'6½", he appeared a good deal smaller than most of his opponents. Today it is clear that the return to lightweight was the right move.

"When I started out, my fighting weight was about three pounds under the lightweight limit, but nowadays I'm right on the limit," Holiday said. "With all the exercise I do every day, my muscles are developing, so it's inevitable I'll put on a bit of weight. It's a mistake to pull weight when you're at the early stages of your career. It's better to move up and grow into the new weight division. Today it takes a bit of work to make the limit, but after 18 months as world champion, I'm still very comfortable at lightweight, and I feel strong."

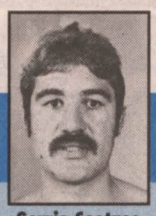
In Holiday's third American outing, in May 1994, he easily outpointed Jesse Torres. He then returned home to flatten South African lightweight champion Danny Myburgh in five rounds, won an easy decision against Harold Miller, and stopped Gene Reed in four.

For the next six months he was inactive while waiting for a title shot. Given Kushner's close relations with the IBF, Holiday was assured of favorable treatment. At the time, he was rated seventh by the WBC, fourth by the WBA, and second by the IBF. The number one contender of each organization was Julio. When Oscar De La Hoya vacated the IBF throne, Holiday stepped in to face Julio in Sun City, South Africa. The Colombian power-puncher was an overwhelming favorite, but the underdog won all 10 of the completed rounds with his clever pressure fighting and persistent body attack. He dropped Julio at the end of the 10th, and as the Colombian collapsed on his stool, he indicated he was unable to continue, making Holiday a world champion.

Holiday followed with defenses over then-unbeaten Chicagoan Rocky Martinez (W 12) and the erratic John Lark (KO 10) before venturing to Melbourne to defend against a comebacking Fenech. What was expected to be a highly competitive fight—Fenech was the slight betting favorite—turned out to be a blowout. Holiday dropped his man in the first round and overwhelmed him in the second, prompting the Australian's corner to throw

(Continued on page 62)

Arnold Taylor



Gerrie Coetzee

Welcome Ncita

CHAMPS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Champion	Division	Reign	The Skinny
Willie Smith	Bantamweight	1927-1928	Olympic gold medalist; arguably most scientific SA boxer of all
Vic Toweel	Bantamweight	1950-1952	Won title after only 12 bouts, dethroning legendary Manuel Ortiz
Arnold Taylor	WBA Bantamweight	1973-1974	Unknown when he won crown in thriller vs. Romeo Anaya; lost it in first defense
Peter Mathebula	WBA Flyweight	1980-1981	Kept title only three months, then lost three straight bouts by kayo
Gerrie Coetzee	WBA Heavyweight	1983-1984	Slugger with bionic right hand won crown by kayoing Michael Dokes; made no successful defenses
Piet Crous	WBA Cruiserweight	1984-1985	Surprised Ossie Ocasio to take title; never fought outside of SA
Brian Mitchell	WBA, IBF Junior Lightweight	1986-1991; 1991-1992	Distinguished by lengthy reign; politics kept him from fighting at home
Welcome Ncita	IBF Junior Featherweight	1990-1992	Might still be champ if not for that miracle right hand from Kennedy McKinney
Dingaan Thobela	WBA Lightweight	1993	Slick but streaky boxer upended Tony Lopez, then lost twice to Orzubek Nazarov
Vuyani Bungu	IBF Junior Featherweight	1994-Present	Conclusive decision over McKinney was among biggest surprises of '94
Frans Botha	IBF Heavyweight	1995-1996	"White Buffalo" was stripped after testing positive for steroids
Mbulelo Botile	IBF Bantamweight	1995-Present	Has emerged as consistent and well-rounded performer in relatively weak division
Phillip Holiday	IBF Lightweight	1995-Present	Recent victory over Ivan Robinson boosted hisstock considerably
Sugarboy Malinga	WBC Super Middleweight	1996	Safety-first boxer is the king of the close decisions

Phillip Holiday

(Continued from page 61)

in the towel. This was followed by an easy points win over Mexico's Joel Diaz in October (W 12), and then the Robinson fight, Holiday's fourth defense of '96.

***

Holiday remains small for his division, is no great stylist, and does not have one-punch concussive power at the highest level. Nonetheless, his assets are impressive. He maintains a phenomenal work rate and has surprising natural strength that enables him to pressure his opponents for 12 rounds. He also possesses a solid chin, a usually tight bob-and-weave defense, one of the best body attacks in the game, and a so-far indomitable will to win.

His ultimate ambition is "to retire undefeated and undisputed lightweight champion of the world." Though the likes of Nazarov and Shane Mosley represent serious challenges to his claim to be number one, he is a fighter who will not easily be beaten—as five title challengers have already discovered. There is no doubt he is right up there with Vuyani Bungu and Mbulelo Botile as South Africa's best active boxers, and he's probably a year or two away from his peak.

Holiday said he "doesn't have a clue" how much longer he'll stay in the game, but is refreshingly realistic about the subject. "I like to take one fight at a time," he said. "I've got my goals in the back of my mind, and if those things don't work out and I start taking too much punishment, start getting some losses, I will have to start thinking about retiring and giving it up.

"Today I might say to you I want another 10 fights, and tomorrow I get beaten up badly and then think it's time to give up. And then I might say I want another two fights, and then things go very well, and I'll think, *Why should I give up?*"

In the meantime, round after round he continues to leave bewildered opponents wondering when he'll give up punching them. The Robinson fight came in the right place, at the right time, and with the right people watching. But don't think for a minute that because he's no longer boxing's well-kept secret, Holiday plans on slowing down. ■

Gavin Evans is an author and freelance writer based in London, England.

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Don King–Yes

(Continued from page 32)

last two decades than any other promoter. He has paid record-setting purses in several divisions, and has often broken his own records. Fighters like Ali, Holmes, Duran, Chavez, and Tyson have anchored his stable.

From 1991 to '94, King repeatedly promoted competitive multi-championship cards. In '93 alone, more than 300,000 fans attended his four biggest promotions, including a record 135,000 in Mexico City for Chavez-Haugen. And three times he's promoted more than 20 championship fights in one year. Name one other promoter over the past 50 years who has done it once. You can't.

If King's actions make him unworthy of enshrinement, then let's reexamine a few of the more famous inductees. Tex Rickard's alleged eye for pre-teenage girls nearly landed him in prison. Although Rickard was acquitted, public sentiment was against him and his reputation was ruined. In his autobiography, Joe Louis admitted he was a heroin junkie, a deadbeat, a womanizer (he fathered several children out of wedlock), and on occasion used women as sparring partners.

Kid McCoy took a dive against Jim Corbett, which killed boxing in New York for years. Joe Gans laid down against Terry McGovern. Jake LaMotta admitted to throwing his fight against Billy Fox. Rocky Graziano was suspended in New York for failing to report a bribe offer, which is why his second fight vs. Tony Zale landed in Chicago. Jack Johnson sold a confession to Nat Fleischer, then publisher and editor of THE RING, in which he claimed he took a dive against Jess Willard. And over the years, several historians have told me legendary promoter/manager Doc Kearns was one of the most dishonest men in the history of the sport. How many of these guys are a credit to their sport?

If King is the Darth Vader of boxing, why do so many fighters continue to sign with him? Could any man stay in business, let alone stay on top, if he received nothing but negative press for two decades? Why hasn't he been suspended or banned by any state commissions in America, or any national commissions abroad? There must be one person with integrity who works on a

commission, or even used to work on one, who can supply evidence that King has committed at least a few of the dozens of crimes of which he has been accused. Right?

There wouldn't be professional boxing if it weren't for promoters. For more than 20 years, King has given us some of the most memorable moments in sports, and he's done so with fighters who have already been, or eventually will be, enshrined in Canastota. The real debate should be, "What took so long?" ■

Ed Maloney is a columnist for World Boxing and a former associate editor of The Ring.

Don King–No

(Continued from page 33)

electors in the non-participant category at Canastota, says the International Boxing Hall of Fame "is not so much to honor them as identify them with history."

No, a Hall of Fame should be a great honor, not a history book. Villains are in history books. They are not in halls of fame. Big does not mean great. Historical importance does not mean good. Notoriety does not mean fame. King is big, historically important, and does not belong in boxing's Hall of Fame any more than Carbo and Palermo deserve canonization.

King's presence dishonors those already enshrined. "It's a *boxing* Hall of Fame," argues Emanuel Steward. "If you removed all the bad guys, there'd be a lot of vacancies."

Good idea. Let the Hall start a vacuum committee to clean its walls of mistakes like Don King, the world's greatest mistake. ■

Michael Katz covers boxing for the New York Daily News.

Ray Lunny

(Continued from page 45)

doesn't bother the 77-year-old contender from a long-ago time, when boxing titles weren't issued like library cards. It was, concedes the thoughtful, well-spoken Lunny, "a different era," which, typically, is as close to a criticism of contemporary boxing as he will allow himself.

A native of San Francisco, Lunny inherited the boxing bug from his father, a Teamster, and it was nurtured by, of all people, his grandmother. Beginning when he was seven and continuing through his middle-teenage years, every Christmas she gave Lunny a brand new pair of boxing gloves.

By the time the scrawny kid who was always smallest in his class had his first regulation amateur fight at 15, Lunny had a holy trinity of heroes consisting of world champions Jimmy McLarnin, Tony Canzoneri, and Barney Ross, and worshipped so faithfully at their altar that out of his next 60 amateur bouts, he lost only three. In 1936, he won the San Francisco Golden Gloves title at 118 pounds.

Lunny was 19, and fresh out of Commerce High School, when he got a telegram from Joey Fox in Los Angeles, who was offering to manage him as a professional fighter. Of Fox and George "Dutch" Meyer, Fox's partner, Lunny says, "I had two of the finest managers in the world. They were so knowledgeable and respected in the game. The things they taught me! They just made my career a real easy one."

Fox had been managed by Meyer in his own ring career. "Damon Runyon told me personally that he considered Dutch the most knowledgeable fight man he ever met," says Lunny. "That's as good a recommendation as any I can think of."

Until he got off the Daylight Express just north of Los Angeles, Lunny had never even met Joey Fox, but their handshake sealed a relationship that was as firm and trusting as one between father and son. In fact, to Lunny and his other fighters, Fox was known as Papa Joe. "We never, ever had a written contract," Lunny says. Whatever Fox and Meyer decided was law. "My managers never even checked with me about my opponents. I never knew who I was fighting until I read it in the paper," adds Lunny.

They were quite a team. In his first 33 pro bouts, Lunny won all but the three that were declared draws. The San Franciscan with what one wag described as "the appearance and mannerisms of the nicest kid at the junior prom" became a big drawing card at the West Coast's classiest boxing venue, Hollywood Legion Stadium.

"It was a beautiful arena, and had the glamour of lots of movie stars at ringside," recalls Lunny, who was a favorite of such regular patrons as Robert Taylor, George Raft, and Groucho Marx. "I met them all, and they were all very nice people."

Lunny had something else in common with them: a lot of rave reviews.

"A fistic [Fred] Astaire on his feet," said Sheridan Brown in a 1940 piece hailing Lunny in THE RING. "Lunny has a left hand that sticks with jarring, cutting force at snake-tongue speed. This is his most effective weapon, but he can throw any punch in the book with a sharp explosion on the landing end."

"The jab was my bread-and-butter punch," acknowledges Lunny. "I don't know how it came along. Maybe because I had problems with my right hand for most of my career, and I used that to make up for it."

Paul Cavagnaro, a lifelong friend and stablemate of Lunny's, was a 1940s heavyweight prospect who studied all the great boxers and sparred with many who trained in San Francisco. He declares unequivocally, "One thing I'll stake my life on: No one ever had the left jab of Ray Lunny. I saw Robinson, Pep, plus others, and although their arsenals of punches stood out, their jabs weren't as classical as Ray's."

Verne Bybee learned that from a painful vantage point. "He was a fighter, game,

tough, and strong," recalls Lunny of his great San Francisco rival whom he decisioned twice. "At the end of 10 rounds, he just took a deep breath and that was it." But both times Lunny's jab virtually immobilized Bybee, who, according to THE RING'S account of their first battle before 5,000 customers at the Civic Auditorium, "looked well-nigh nailed to the floor as Ray flitted through his defenses like a torturing shadow. Ray lashed machine-gun punches to the mark and foiled Bybee's every effort to smash home his own shocking right hand."

Later, Lunny and Bybee, who went on to become a top referee, grew into good friends. "He was a guest in my home and I in his," says Lunny. "We got along great. It was just in the ring we didn't get along good." (Bybee died several years ago.)

Today, belligerence and trash-talk are integral parts of too many fighters' personae, and some of them you would hesitate to run into on the street, much less invite home to dinner. That's something else that was different in Lunny's day.

"Most of the people I fought were guys I'd like to have in my home," he says. "They were pretty nice people." Just because two guys spent half an hour trying to beat each other's brains out in the ring didn't mean you couldn't be decent to one another—and even be friends—afterward. It was that way after featherweight champion Chalky Wright handed Lunny his first loss, winning a decision over him in a non-title bout on Halloween, 1941.

"He was the best I ever fought," says Lunny. "He was a boxer, puncher, and a smart fighter. I didn't have any doubts about the decision. No way—he won. As usual, we shook hands afterward, and that was it. In those days it was very professional. There were no personalities involved. If you won or lost, you shook hands and left the ring."

Another great friend and old rival of Lunny's is George Latka. Lunny drew with Latka on December 15 in San Francisco and then decisioned him at Legion Stadium in the rematch five weeks later. "Probably the smartest boxer I ever faced," Lunny says of his friend.

Then, on March 3, came the fight with Lemos, whom Lunny had beaten in their Golden Gloves days. Eight weeks after his first kayo loss, they were rematched in San Francisco, and Lunny won a clear-cut decision to solidify his standing in the upper echelon of the 135-pound rankings.

But World War II was raging then, and after the second Lemos fight, Lunny enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard. For the next 3½ years, he fought only three times, losing a decision to contender Lulu Constantino, stopping Al Citrino, and getting stopped in seven by Willie Joyce. For none of those fights was he able to do more than a day of training. For Joyce, he recalls, "I had to jump ship to get to the fight."

After serving a year aboard a ship in the South Pacific, Lunny was discharged from the service, and then, after he resumed training, from boxing, too.

"I worked out for two weeks, and Joey Fox took me aside," he recalls. "'Ray,' he said, 'get out of the business. You're all through.'"

Just like that, Lunny's boxing career was over. There wasn't one word of debate about it either. "I always took my managers' advice," he explains. "I had people who knew more about the business than I did."

If the war hadn't happened, who knows how far Lunny might have gone? It's not a question that has kept him awake at night.

"I guess for a short time I might have been a little bitter, but I got over that," he says. "It's just life, that's all. I'm not angry or anything. If you let everything bother you in life, you'd be a mental wreck. Besides, I think of guys who were more deserving than myself and never got that break either.

"I was happy for the career I had and the people I met."

But Lunny knew too much about boxing to be out of the sport for long. In 1947, he was appointed instructor and coach of the ring team at Stanford University, a position he held for the next 25 years.

"Boxing was a low-key sport at Stanford," he says. "There was no such thing as prospecting for fighters or trying to get guys with previous experience to go to Stanford. We stressed strictly elementary boxing, and as a result we couldn't go to too many tournaments."

Still, in 1960, Lunny had himself a heavyweight who weighed only 173 pounds, but made it all the way to the finals of the NCAA tournament. "At weigh-ins we put something in his slippers to help him out," Lunny says of Ed Rothman, who just happened to be the son of Joey Fox, and is now an assistant city attorney in San Francisco.

Talent or not, with Rothman and all the boxers Lunny coached at Stanford, there was never any notion of trying the pro ranks.

"Anybody who gets a Stanford education and wants to become a professional fighter, I tell 'em to go have their head examined," says Lunny.

Around the time Stanford dropped its boxing program in 1972, Lunny was involved in guiding the career of another star pupil who reminded San Francisco fight fans of the '40s idol. Not only did the young 130-pounder have many of the same moves, but he even had the same name.

Under his father's tutelage, Ray Lunny III had won the 1968 Western Regional U.S. Olympic Trials and, the next year, the National AAU 125-pound title. After fighting to a draw in his pro debut in 1970, young Lunny went undefeated in 24 bouts (including two more draws) and followed his dad's footsteps into the world ratings.

Managing his only son was emotionally "very difficult in the beginning," says the elder Lunny, "but gradually it got easier as his talent blossomed." As Papa Joe did for him, Papa Ray called the shots for his fighter. "I made the decisions about who we were going to fight. I never even checked with him," he says. "That's the way it should be. Ray had some good fights, and we never argued about anything."

The Ray Lunny III story in boxing had a happier ending than his father's—at least up to a point. In 1976, he did get a chance to fight for a title. Lunny III lost on a cut eye to WBC super featherweight champion Alfredo Escalera (KO by 12), then hung up the gloves. Now 45, he has a successful career in law enforcement.

Was the late-model Lunny as good as the '30s classic? The answer comes as fast as the jab that was the vintage Lunny's calling card.

"You bet! You bet!" says the proud father. "A lot of old-timers say, 'My son doesn't meet my standards.' My son met my standards and more. He did a helluva job."

But then, as both Ray Lunnys will swear, when you have a manager who knows the game and takes care of you like a father, it makes for a kinder, gentler career—no matter what era you belong to.■

Pete Ehrmann, a frequent contributor to The Ring, is based in West Allis, Wisconsin.

BOXING COLLECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

By Don Scott

If you have followed this column at all, you've read about posters, programs, autographs, etc., and from time to time you've read about oddball items that occasionally pop up. Here's a list of such items that you may find interesting, if not hilarious.

The biggest name in boxing collecting is Muhammad Ali, and one of the largest dealers of Ali memorabilia is Steve Jackson, who runs Ali Collectibles in Hackensack, New Jersey. Jackson recently ran a well-publicized auction at which some rare and not-so-rare memorabilia was sold (about 200 lots in all). Most of the items were mainstream stuff and fetched modest but reasonable prices. Included in this group, however, were some oddball items, most of which had been endorsed by Ali at some point in his career and bore his name. Some of the details:

A limited edition WBA Ali belt buckle w/facsimile signature on back: $354; Ali boxing game (signed): $518; Ali Halloween costume for kids: $215; Ali Everlast belt buckle: $237; Ali collector plate: $75; pair of Ali boxing gloves: $133; Amerivox "Champions Forever" phone card: $107; three cans of Ali shoe polish: $118; Muhammad Ali Westclox keywound alarm clock: $205.

Then, for those of you with bug problems, there was the D-Con Muhammad Ali roach trap for $146; Ali doll by Mego: $195 (the Ken Norton doll went for a paltry $107); Ali whiskey decanter: $413; Ali Effenbee doll (signed): $627; Salvino sports figure (signed): $471.

Hungry? You could have had a bottle of Ali Old Kentucky Cabin Hot 'n Zesty Barbecue sauce for $98; Ali shaving cream gel: $50; Ali aftershave and cologne sampler: $40; Ali wristwatch by Bradley: $121; Ali baseball cap by Nutmeg Mills with facsimile signature and actual signature: $195; Ali jump rope: $216; Ali hairbrush with facsimile signature: $110; pink Ali matchbox from Joe Bugner fight in Malaysia: $98; Ali-Foreman keychain: $45; Ali-Frazier decal from Manila: $220; decal from Bugner fight in Malaysia: $107; souvenir ashtray from Ali-Frazier I: $293.

For a dubious dessert, how about the Ali Crisp Crunch candy bar from 1978 (a bit stale, I would imagine) for $89?

Of course, there was lots of beautiful mainstream stuff, and lot number one was a jewel. It was the trunks Ali wore against Oscar Bonavena in 1970, and that pair of shorts went for $18,150. To give you an idea of the difference between the value of fight-worn and non-fight-worn items, a non-worn Everlast robe signed by Ali went for just $518, and non-worn fight shoes sold for $182.

We'll give you the details from THE RING's own March sports auction after the final gavel sounds. At this writing, the list of truly historical memorabilia that has been consigned is awesome.

***

On another front, we note with interest that Jose Torres and Sugar Ray Leonard will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June. Items from these two great fighters abound, with Leonard memorabilia much more common. If you are going to the championship weekend in Canastota and want to get a jump on the festivities by accumulating items for autographs, here are some guidelines.

Regarding Leonard memorabilia, programs and posters can be found from all his major fights, including the Hearns and Duran series, as well as the Hagler fight. Items from his epic encounter with Wilfred Benitez are harder to find, and anything prior to his first championship is even more difficult to locate. But nothing of his is really hot right now, so don't get burned.

Regarding Torres memorabilia, posters, programs, and tickets are going to be hard to find. May I suggest the books he has written and the various magazine covers on which he has appeared.

If you just want a signed photo, don't worry, there will be lots of those available from dealers throughout the weekend. ■

*Don Scott is editor and publisher of **Boxing Collectors' News** and may be contacted through* THE RING.

WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by THE RING are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBC ratings were compiled as of December 1996, the WBA ratings as of November 1996, and the IBF ratings as of January 1997.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	–	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	C	–
Michael Moorer (USA)	–	–	C
Lennox Lewis (GB)	1	8	6
Oliver McCall (USA)	2	1	1
Mike Tyson (USA)	3	2	2
Henry Akinwande (GB)	4	–	–
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	5	10	10
Orlin Norris (USA)	6	4	11
Andrew Golota (POL)	7	9	–
Corrie Sanders (SA)	8	–	3
David Tua (NZ)	9	–	8
Tony Tucker (USA)	10	5	12
Francois Botha (SA)	–	3	4
Vaughn Bean (USA)	25	6	5
Bruce Seldon (USA)	–	7	–
Obed Sullivan (USA)	19	–	7
Ray Mercer (USA)	11	–	9

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	C	–	–
Nate Miller (USA)	–	C	–
Adolpho Washington (USA)	–	–	C
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	1	1	4
Akim Tafer (FRA)	2	5	–
Torsten May (GER)	3	9	6
Robert Daniels (USA)	4	3	–
Terry Dunstan (GB)	5	7	9
David Izeqwire (NIG)	6	12	7
Jacob Mofokeng (SA)	7	–	3
Chris Okoh (GB)	8	–	10
Carl Thompson (GB)	9	–	–
Yosukezan Nishijima (JAP)	10	–	–
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	2	–
Saul Montana (DR)	16	4	–
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	11	6	–
Rick Lamontagne (USA)	–	8	–
Arimetea Silva (BRA)	–	10	–
Uriah Grant (USA)	28	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Arthur Williams (USA)	–	–	5
Ken Murphy (USA)	–	11	8

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	C	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	C	C
William Guthrie (USA)	1	2	1
Michael Nunn (USA)	2	6	–
Mike McCallum (USA)	3	–	10
Eddy Smulders (HOLL)	4	1	6
Crawford Ashley (GB)	5	–	4
Graciano Rocchigiani (GER)	6	–	5
Montell Griffin (USA)	7	3	–
Merqui Sosa (DR)	8	11	–
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	9	–	–
Nicky Piper (GB)	10	–	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	30	4	3
Leif Keiski (SWE)	–	5	–
Joseph Kiwanuka (UGA)	–	7	–
Antoine Byrd (USA)	–	8	–
Darrin Allen (USA)	27	9	2
Dario Matteoni (ARG)	22	10	–
Ray Berry (USA)	29	–	7
Frank Tate (USA)	–	–	8
John Scully (USA)	–	–	9

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Robin Reid (GB)	C	–	–
Frank Liles (USA)	–	C	–
Roy Jones (USA)	–	–	C
Henry Wharton (GB)	1	2	3
Thulane Malinga (SA)	2	–	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	3	–	–
Vincenzo Nardiello (ITA)	4	–	9
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	5	6	11
Frederic Seillier (FRA)	6	1	4
Joe Calzaghe (GB)	7	10	7
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	8	7	10
Chris Omar Johnson (USA)	9	–	–
Joseph Kiwanuka (UGA)	10	–	–
Gary Ballard (SA)	12	3	2
Mauricio Amaral (BRA)	15	4	8
Tim Littles (USA)	–	5	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	17	8	1
Mike Makata (NZ)	–	9	–
Tony Byrd (USA)	–	–	5
Bryant Brannon (USA)	–	–	6

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	–	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Otis Grant (CAN)	1	3	12
Quincy Taylor (USA)	2	–	–
Julian Jackson (USA)	3	–	–
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	4	11	6
Robert McCracken (GB)	5	–	3
Richie Woodhall (GB)	6	–	–
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	7	–	–
Neville Brown (GB)	8	–	–
John David Jackson (USA)	9	–	2
Peter Venancio (BRA)	10	1	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	–	2	5
Glen Johnson (USA)	–	4	8
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	5	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	6	–
Anthony Andrews (GUY)	21	7	–
Anthony Stephens (USA)	–	8	–
Julian Jackson (VI)	–	9	–
Brian Barbosa (USA)	12	10	7
Vacant	–	–	1
Lloyd Bryan (USA)	–	–	4
Andrew Council (USA)	–	12	9
Branco Sabot (CRO)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Terry Norris (USA)	C	–	C
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	–	C	–
Faouzi Hattab (FRA)	1	–	–
Raul Marquez (USA)	2	10	1
Troy Waters (AUSTRL)	3	–	–
Julio Cesar Vasquez (ARG)	4	5	12
David Ciarlante (ITA)	5	–	–
Stephane Ouellette (CAN)	6	–	–
Said Bennajem (FRA)	7	–	–
Ernie Artango (AUSTRL)	8	–	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	9	–	–
Nick Rupa (USA)	10	7	11
Carl Daniels (USA)	12	1	2
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	17	2	5
Robert McCracken (GB)	–	3	–
Giovanni Pretorious (SA)	–	4	3
Javier Castillejo (SPA)	15	6	–
Alejandro Ugueto (VEN)	–	8	–
Engels Pedroza (VEN)	–	9	–
Anthony Stephens (USA)	16	–	4
Steve Foster (GB)	–	–	6
Mark Breland (USA)	–	–	7
Adrian Dodson (GB)	22	–	8
Rossman Henry (COL)	–	–	9
Jairo Siris (COL)	–	–	10

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Pernell Whitaker (USA)	C	–	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Patrick Charpentier (FRA)	1	2	1
Derrell Coley (USA)	2	4	8
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	3	7	–
Jose Luis Navarro (SPA)	4	–	–
Robert West (USA)	5	–	–
Andrei Pestryaev (RUS)	6	1	–
Ariel Chaves (ARG)	7	–	–
Ralph Jones (USA)	8	10	–
Hiroyuki Yoshino (JAP)	9	–	–
Diobelys Hurtado (CUBA)	10	–	–
Sean Sullivan (NZ)	–	3	–
Oba Carr (USA)	–	5	10
Andrew Murray (GUY)	26	6	7
Juan Negron (PR)	–	8	9
Jeff Malcolm (AUSTRL)	–	9	–
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	–	2
Hitonon Sato (JAP)	–	–	3
Tony Martin (USA)	22	11	4
Mahenge Zulu (ZAI)	–	–	5
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	6

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
Frankie Randall (USA)	–	C	–
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	–	–	C
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	1	–	–

Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	2	2	–
Ismael Chaves (ARG)	3	–	–
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	4	1	–
Rafael Ruelas (MEX)	5	–	8
Charles Murray (USA)	6	7	7
Soren Sondergaard (DEN)	7	9	3
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	8	6	2
Juan Coggi (ARG)	9	5	–
Jong Hoon Yuh (KOR)	10	–	–
Jose Barbosa (VEN)	13	3	–
Freddie Ladd (USA)	11	4	–
Viacheslav Yanovsky (KAZ)	–	8	–
David Kamau (USA)	16	10	–
Freddie Pendleton (USA)	–	–	1
Jermal Corbin (USA)	–	–	4
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	12	5
Jan Bergman (SA)	–	–	6
Leonardo Mas (PR)	26	–	9
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	12	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Philip Holiday (SA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Steve Johnston (USA)	1	5	–
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	2	–	–
Angel Mona (FRA)	3	2	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	4	6	12
Ricardo Silva (ARG)	5	–	–
Leavander Johnson (USA)	6	–	–
Billy Irwin (CAN)	7	–	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	8	7	–
Manuel Fernandez (FRA)	9	–	–
Jong Kwon Baek (KOR)	10	–	–
Leavander Johnson (USA)	–	1	4
Ivan Robinson (USA)	–	3	3
Carlos Fernandez (PORT)	–	4	–
Adrianus Taroreh (INDO)	–	8	–
David Dodi Tetteh (GHA)	21	9	–
Samir Cherrad (FRA)	20	10	–
Demetrius Ceballos (USA)	28	–	1
Eduardo Morales (ARG)	22	12	2
Miguel Julio (COL)	–	–	5
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	–	–	6
Shane Mosley (USA)	12	–	7
Fred Ladd (USA)	–	–	8
Billy Schwer (GB)	17	11	9
Jose Zuniga (COL)	19	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Azumah Nelson (GHA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Arturo Gatti (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Anatoly Alexandrov (RUS)	1	2	5
Gabriel Ruelas (USA)	2	–	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	3	6	2
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	4	–	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	5	5	11
Ulrich Johnson (TRIN)	6	–	–
P.J. Gallagher (GB)	7	–	12
Djamel Lifa (FRA)	8	8	8
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	9	–	10
Douglas Villarreal (COL)	10	7	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	1	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	3	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	–	4	–
Koji Arisawa (JAP)	–	9	–
Orlando Soto (PAN)	–	10	–
Tracy Patterson (USA)	–	–	1
Harold Warren (USA)	17	–	3
Jaime Rangel (COL)	–	–	4
Cliff Samardin (AUSTRL)	–	–	6
Ramon Ledon (CUBA)	–	–	7
Wilson Rodriguez (DR)	–	–	9

FEATHERWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Tom Johnson (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Carlos Rios (ARG)	1	2	9
Cesar Soto (MEX)	2	–	–
Billy Hardy (GB)	3	6	4
Yuji Watanabe (JAP)	4	1	–
Jesus Chavez (USA)	5	–	–
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)	6	–	–
Ever Beleno (COL)	7	8	6
Mehdi Labdouni (FRA)	8	–	–
Frederic Perez (FRA)	9	–	–
Koji Matsumoto (JAP)	10	–	–
Victor Polo (COL)	25	3	–
Rafael Meran (DR)	–	4	–
Tony Wehbe (INDO)	–	5	–
Roque Cassiani (COL)	–	7	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	9	–
Victor Llerena (COL)	21	10	–
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	1
Welcome Ncita (SA)	–	–	2
Jose Badillo (PR)	–	–	3
November Ntshingila (AUSTRL)	13	–	5
Victor Polo (COL)	–	–	7
Carlos Gerena (PR)	–	–	8
Arnulfo Castillo (USA)	–	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Daniel Zaragoza (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Erik Morales (MEX)	1	3	–
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	2	–	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	3	–	–
Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)	4	–	–
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	5	5	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	6	6	–
Harold Mestre (COL)	7	–	11
Enrique Jupiter (MEX)	8	–	–
Jesus Salud (USA)	9	–	10
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	10	–	–
Yuichi Kasai (JAP)	–	1	8
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	2	–
Yober Ortega (VEN)	–	4	–
Mike Garcia (USA)	–	7	–
Serge Poilbian (FRA)	20	8	–
Bong Chul Kim (KOR)	15	9	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	10	–
Anell Barotillo (AUSTRL)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Kennedy McKinney (USA)	22	–	3
Victor Llerena (COL)	–	–	4
Vincent Belcastro (ITA)	–	–	5
Nurhuda (INDO)	–	–	6
Martin Krastev (BUL)	19	12	7
Angel Chacon (PR)	21	–	9

BANTAMWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Daorung C. Siriwat (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Victor Rabanales (MEX)	1	–	–
Pastor Maurin (ARG)	2	8	–
In Jin Chi (KOR)	3	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	4	6	–
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	5	–	6
Jorge Monsalvo (COL)	6	–	–
Shaszi Nitta (JAP)	7	–	7
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	8	12	–
Javier Campanario (SPA)	9	–	–
Jesus Sarabia (MEX)	10	–	–
Abraham Torres (VEN)	–	1	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	2	–
Yong Hoon Lee (KOR)	–	3	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	4	–
Angel Chacon (PR)	–	5	–
Tim Austin (USA)	15	7	1
Setsuo Kawamasu (JAP)	14	9	–
John Michael Johnson (USA)	–	10	–
Adrian Kaspari (INDO)	24	–	2
Jesus Perez (COL)	18	–	3
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	–	4
Wilson Alcorro (COL)	–	–	5
Jess Maca (PHIL)	–	–	8
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	–	–	9
Ancee Gedeon (USA)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Hiroshi Kawashima (JAP)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Danny Romero (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	5	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	2	7	–
Luis Bolanos (COL)	3	8	–
Jose Rafael Sosa (ARG)	4	–	–
Luis Benavides (COL)	5	11	8
Veeraphol Sahaprom (THAI)	6	3	–
Kazuhisa Machida (JAP)	7	–	–
Evangelio Perez (PAN)	8	–	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	9	–	–
Jorge Barrera (MEX)	10	–	–
Aquiles Guzman (VEN)	–	1	–
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	2	–
Alimi Goitia (VEN)	–	4	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	6	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	–	9	–
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	25	10	7
Jaji Sibali (SA)	11	–	1
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	2
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	22	–	3
Andy Agosto (PR)	14	12	4
Sombak Singchawan (THAI)	–	–	5
Juvenal Berrio (COL)	–	–	6
Jose Sosa (ARG)	–	–	9
Wilfredo Vargas (PR)	–	–	10

FLYWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	**22**	**C**	**–**
Mark Johnson (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Isaias Zamudio (USA)	1	4	10
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	2	–	1
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	3	11	9
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	4	–	–
Yong Soon Chang (KOR)	5	5	–
Chokchai Chokviwat (THAI)	6	–	–
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	7	8	4
Salvatore Fanni (ITA)	8	–	–
Peter Culshaw (GB)	9	3	–
Paul Weir (GB)	10	–	–
Evangelino Perez (PAN)	–	1	2
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	–
Hiroki Ioka (JAP)	20	6	–
Takashi Ohba (JAP)	27	7	–
Phanieng Adradeet Gym (THAI)	–	9	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	26	10	–
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	3
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	5
Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI)	–	–	6
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	7
Ilido Julio (COL)	–	–	8

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Michael Carbajal (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	1	2	6
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	2	–	–
Yosam Choi (KOR)	3	9	–
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	4	–	–
Shiro Yahiro (JAP)	5	–	–
Kaaj Chartbandi (THAI)	6	–	–
Phanieng Sasiprabha (THAI)	7	–	–
Micky Cantwell (GB)	8	–	–
Ramon Euroza (MEX)	9	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	10	11	12
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	12	1	–
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	–	3	–
Sinn Ploenchit (THAI)	–	4	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	5	3
Jesus Chong (MEX)	–	6	8
Yong Jin Kim (KOR)	16	7	11
Suzuki Kabato (JAP)	–	8	–
Mzukuzi Marali (SA)	30	10	–
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	18	–	1
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	2
Onewin Chareon (THAI)	–	–	4
Nelson Dieppa (PR)	–	–	5
Takashi Shiohama (JAP)	–	–	7
Juan Cordoba (ARG)	–	–	9
Eric Griffin (USA)	15	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Ratanapol Voraphin (THAI)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Rocky Lin (JAP)	1	2	–
Sinn Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	2	–	–
Ala Villamor (PHIL)	3	8	10
Hyung Sok Kang (KOR)	4	–	–
Myung Sup Park (KOR)	5	–	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	6	5	2
Morgan Ndumo (SA)	7	–	–
Payak Nakornluang (THAI)	8	–	–
Lindi Memani (SA)	9	–	–
Ray Villamor (PHIL)	10	–	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	1	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	3	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	4	–
Sung Tae Lim (KOR)	–	6	–
Kwanjai Battery (THAI)	–	7	–
Fah Sung Ponasawang (THAI)	–	9	–
Pongsaklek Sithanonsak (THAI)	–	10	–
Juan Herrera (COL)	15	–	1
Osvaldo Guerrero (MEX)	–	–	3
Mongol Charoen (THAI)	–	–	4
Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)	26	–	5
Wondee Charoen (THAI)	–	–	6
Luis Doria (COL)	–	–	7
Lee Sandoval (NIC)	19	–	8
Keysuke Yokoyama (JAP)	27	–	9

RING CLASSIC

Ted "Kid" Lewis—or is it Gershon Mendeloff?—tries to augment his ring earnings by playing cards with his wife. Would the welterweight have gained legendary status had he not changed his name?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Some Of The Ring's Greatest Fighters Derived Their Nom de Guerre From Many Strange Sources

From The Ring, March 1949

By Jersey Jones

It probably was the Old Professor's last interview. Actually, it wasn't an interview at all; just another of those interesting gabfests in which Billy McCarney specialized during one of the most colorful, exciting, adventurous careers this rugged boxing profession ever has known.

It was late in the afternoon of the Marcel Cerdan-Tony Zale affair, and we put in an enjoyable session listening to the Old Professor in Lew Burston's office.

A few hours later, Billy picked up a cold from the chilling breezes that swept in from Newark Bay and across the open expanses of Jersey City's Municipal Stadium.

McCarney must have picked up, and shaken off, many a cold before. But, at 76, a guy no longer is a youngster, particularly when he's crowded probably 176 years of living into those 76. And Billy hadn't been in the best of health anyway. A year and a half before, he couldn't accompany Joe Louis on the Latin-American tour he had arranged for the heavyweight champion. "A bum ticker," the medicos had said, and a jaunt of that sort would have been too risky.

And so this time, what normally would be regarded as merely a "slight cold" proved fatal for the Old Professor. Two days after his shivering experience in Jersey City, the final count was tolled over a lovable old guy whose life story would read like something rolling off the pen of a Jack London at his exciting best.

***

That afternoon in Burston's office, someone happened to mention colorful nicknames often tacked on fighters—"Smuggy" Hursey for instance, and "Turkey" Thompson, "Tippy" Larkin, "Honey Chile" Johnson, and "Lulu" Constantino—and that started McCarney going. Not that the Old Professor ever required much encouragement to unwind his vocal apparatus. Any casual word dropped within the environs of his acute hearing was all the cue Billy needed.

"Yes, that's one thing boxing commissions haven't been able to legislate out of existence," he said. "Unusual and fancy nicknames—names that catch the fancy of the public are as—*er,* indigenous—pardon—to this fight business as ham is to eggs.

"A nickname can spring from almost anything. It may come from a fighter's nationality; or from his home city, town, or state. Often enough his physical traits will be responsible. Or his profession may figure in. Like Fireman Jim Flynn.

"Some nicknames are natural developments. For instance, it was obvious that a Negro named Henry David Flake would have to wind up with 'Snow' Flake. And what could be more expected than for a Norman Silver to become 'Hi-Ho' Silver,

In boxing, even managers have nicknames. Billy McCarney was "The Old Professor," and he knew the origins of just about every nickname in the Sweet Science (which is a nickname for boxing).

and for a Gus Mell to be dubbed 'Pell' Mell?

"Remember that tough Denver lightweight of 25 years ago, Stanley Yoakem? How that guy could sop up punishment! So it was inevitable that they'd get around to billing him as 'Soakem' Yoakem.

"It's usually a sure thing for a fighter who comes out of the Army or Navy to tote a title that ties up with his branch of the service. Through the years we've had scores of 'em—Gunboat Smith, Soldier Bartfield, Sailor Friedman, Capt. Bob Roper, Sgt. Ray Smith, Sgt. Sammy Baker, Cpl. Izzy Schwartz, and the like.

"Probably the most common nicknames used have been Kid, K.O., Battling, Red, Tiger, and Buddy, but we've had such others as Honeyboy, Midget, Pepper, Cannonball, Peanuts, King Kong, Schoolboy, Spider, Chalky, Snooks, Dusty, Ginger, Tiny, Gorilla, Spike, Sandy, Toughey, Bushy, Red Cap, and at least a hundred others."

***

The Old Professor paused for a moment, then resumed:

"Through the years boxing has produced some really strange titles for fighters. Battling Bozo, for one. And please don't ask me to explain why or how an

Italian would adopt 'Zulu Kid' as his *nom de ring*. Young Griffo's great rival in Australia was an aborigine who operated as 'Pluto.'"

Three of the most picturesque cognomens I can recall belonged to a trio of great Negroes—Dixie Kid, Kid Chocolate, and Beau Jack.

"I never could understand why a Jewish kid should have picked such a handle as 'Louisiana.' Not 'Kid Louisiana' or 'Battling Louisiana.' Just plain 'Louisiana.'

"I doubt if he ever came from Louisiana. So far as I know, he was an all-Philadelphian. You remember him. One of the toughest bantams in the business 30 or more years ago. Fought the best—Kid Williams, Pete Herman, Franky Conway, Patsy Brannigan, Charley Goldman, Eddie Campi, and that crowd.

"I never knew Louisiana's right name, Morris or something like that.

"It was Louisiana who put a dramatic finish to the refereeing aspirations of Gene Fowler, but it probably was just as well for posterity. With his ring hopes squelched, Fowler went on to become one of America's noted newspapermen, a great novelist, and now quite a Man-About-Hollywood.

"Well, this incident happened early in Fowler's career. Gene, working on a Denver paper, was a rabid boxing fan. Maybe he wanted to fight, I wouldn't know. But I do know he became a referee, and doing so well at it he began envisioning himself another Eagle-Eye Charley White, George Siler, or Billy Roche.

THE RING RATINGS, *March 1949*

Sandy Saddler

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joe Louis
1. Joe Walcott
2. Ezzard Charles
3. Lee Savold
4. Johnny Flynn
5. Joey Maxim
6. Jimmy Bivins
7. Joe Kahut
8. Rusty Payne
9. Pat Valentino
10. Freddie Beshore

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Freddie Mills
1. Gus Lesnevich
2. Leonard Morrow
3. Archie Moore
4. Dave Sands
5. Lloyd Marshall
6. Doc Williams
7. Billy Smith
8. Artie Levine
9. Henry Hall
10. Dave Whitlock

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marcel Cerdan
1. Bert Lytell
2. Steve Belloise
3. Jake LaMotta
4. Tony Zale
5. Cyrille Delannoit
6. Sylvester Perkins
7. Dick Turpin
8. Robert Villemain
9. Lee Sala
10. Rocky Graziano

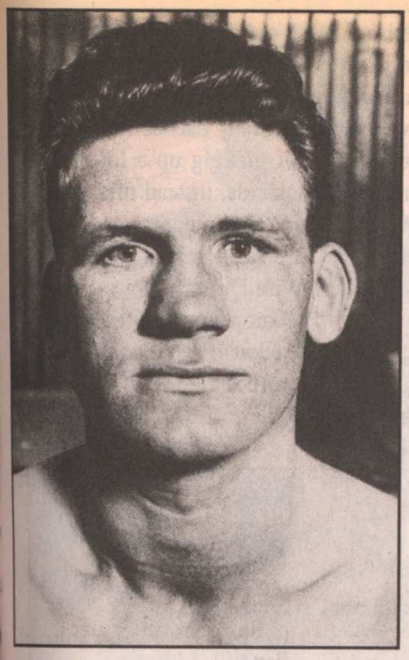
WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ray Robinson
1. Kid Gavilan
2. Frankie Fernandez
3. Bernard Docusen
4. Johnny Greco
5. Beau Jack
6. Gene Burton
7. Johnny Cesario
8. Charley Fusari
9. Charley Williams
10. Vince Foster

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ike Williams
1. Enrique Bolanos
2. Freddie Dawson
3. Maxie Docusen
4. Tommy Campbell
5. Arthur King
6. Jesse Flores
7. Johnny Williams
8. Paddy DeMarco
9. Carlos Chavez
10. Pierre Montane

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sandy Saddler
1. Willie Pep
2. Ray Famechon
3. Jackie Graves
4. Tirso del Rosario
5. Eddie Miller
6. Johnny Molloy
7. Elis Ask
8. Eddie Compo
9. Henry Davis
10. Miguel Acevedo

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Manuel Ortiz
1. Cecil Schoonmaker
2. Luis Romero
3. Guido Ferracin
4. Memo Valero
5. David Kui Kong Young
6. Chico Rosa
7. Jackie Paterson
8. Stan Rowan
9. Theo Medina
10. Luis Galvani

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Rinty Monaghan
1. Maurice Sandeyron
2. Dickie O'Sullivan
3. Dado Marino
4. Black Pico
5. Louis Skena
6. Al Chavez
7. Emile Famechon
8. Charley Squire
9. Honore Pratesi
10. Norman Tennant



In the early days of the modern era, fighters often relied on the military for their nicknames. A prime example of this would be white hope heavyweight Gunboat Smith.

"Louisiana went west to fight a local favorite in Denver, King Leopold, I think it was. At the finish, Fowler raised Leopold's arm. The verdict failed to meet with Louisiana's unanimous approval. He felt he had been the victim of a hometown decision. But he was ahead of Joe Jacobs' time, and hadn't heard that now-historic blast, 'We wuz robbed.' His indignation, however, was no less emphatic. He walked over to Fowler and let one go. It popped Gene flush on the kisser. Gene went bouncing on his dignity, and his enthusiasm for refereeing bounced with him.

"From then on, Fowler's interest in boxing was confined strictly to an observer's role, and the ring's loss became literature's gain."

***

"Where ring names are concerned," continued the Old Professor, "there has been one vast improvement in recent years over what was a common practice in the old days—borrowing the last names of great boxers. The old crowd didn't show much originality when they overran the business with armies of Young Corbetts, Young Ernes, Young Ganses, Young Leonards, and Young Dundees. Some of those fighters had good handles themselves, and it wasn't necessary to swipe those of illustrious predecessors.

"You could pack Madison Square Garden with all the guys who adopted the name Gans, after the original Joe. I'd have to dig back through the records to find 'em all, but offhand I recollect Panama Joe Gans, Allentown Joe Gans, Young Joe Gans, Baby Joe Gans—and, heaven help me, even an Italian Joe Gans.

"And the mob of Leonards that came after Benny! They were even more abundant than the Gans clan. Kid Leonard, Joey Leonard, Battling Leonard, Eddie Leonard, Harry Leonard, Allentown Johnny Leonard, Billy Leonard, and what have you.

"An Italian named Carrora started boxing with Scotty Montieth as his manager. Montieth decided to dub him with a Scottish name, so the kid Carrora became 'Johnny Dundee.' What happened? An epidemic of Italians using the name 'Dundee.'

"There were many reasons for this copying business. For one, boxing in those days didn't occupy too lofty an estate on the social scale, and a lot of folks were violently opposed to what they considered a hoodlum trade. So some kids, to keep their families from knowing of their fistic activities, adopted names already known to the public. Others felt that taking the names of great fighters would bring them luck. Then there were those with difficult names of their own to pronounce, and they simplified matters by swiping those already established. And, of course, there were the usual hero-worshippers who, when they started boxing, wanted to emulate their idols."

At this point, one of the Old Professor's audience was guilty of lese majesty. He interrupted.

***

"Just a moment, Bill," he said. "If I recall, you managed a copyist yourself. 'Young Erne' of Philadelphia."

"Right," readily confessed McCarney. "And he became one of the best lightweights I've ever seen. Fought 'em all—Packey McFarland, Mike Gibbons, Willie Ritchie, Leach Cross, Freddie Welsh, Willie Fitzgerald, Mike Glover, Kid Graves, K.O. Brown, and just about everybody who was anybody in those days.

"Erne could have fought under his right name, which would have been ideal for the ring—Hughie Slavin. But by the time we realized our mistake, it was too late to do much about it.

Stanley Yoakem, a lightweight from the '20s, was famed for absorbing punishment. So it was inevitable that someone would come up with the nickname "Soakem" Yoakem.

"We did, however, manage to ease away in time from the 'Young' part of the handle. The kid had an unfortunate habit of stuttering. You'd ask him something, and his reply would start with a hesitant 'I—I—I.' So the folks started calling him 'Yi-Yi' Erne.

"Some fighters changed their names for euphonious reasons. Gershon Mendeloff became one of boxing's all-time greats as Ted 'Kid' Lewis. Charley Anchowitz held on to the first part of his right title, but he switched the last, and as 'Charley White' he rated with the world's top lightweights. As 'Young Montreal,' Maurice Billingkoff was among the best of our bantams.

"Probably the most natural ring title to come from a real name was Battling Nelson. The Durable Dane's complete handle was Oscar Battling Matthew Nelson."

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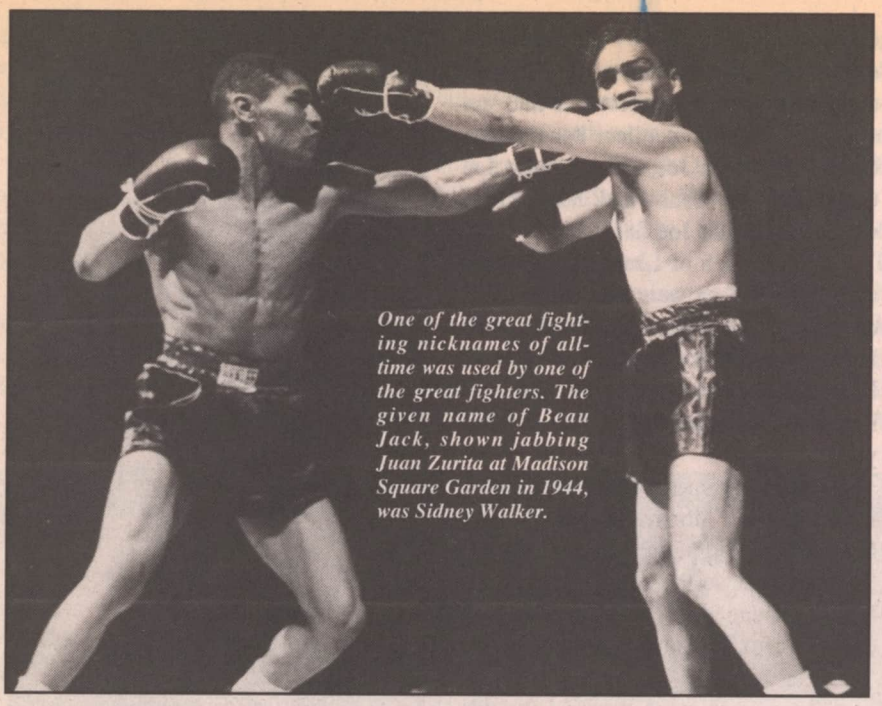
The Old Professor paused for another breath just long enough for someone to



One of the great fighting nicknames of all-time was used by one of the great fighters. The given name of Beau Jack, shown jabbing Juan Zurita at Madison Square Garden in 1944, was Sidney Walker.

break in with: "You had another Philadelphian with an odd nickname, Bill 'Unk' Russell. How did he get it?"

"Well, that was quite a story," said McCarney.

"I'm running a show in Philadelphia, and it looks like a flop, artistically and financially. The weather is cold, and the big barn we're using for an arena is packed with vast emptiness. To make it worse, only a few of the scheduled fighters show up.

"Small crowd or not, I'm going ahead with the show. I'm looking over the few customers, hoping maybe I can spot a fighter or two, when this tough-looking kid comes up to me and says he paid his way in, and if he doesn't see any fights, he'll fight himself.

"Well, it's any old port in a storm. I don't know this kid, but I'm desperate, so I tell him to run along to the dressing room. I don't even think to ask him if he has any ring equipment with him. But that's a minor detail. I keep hustling around the joint, hunting for other fighters, and when I suddenly pause in my chase, I look toward the ring, and there's the kid. For trunks, he is wearing long winter underwear, held together with a safety pin. He doesn't seem to care who his opponent is, but it makes no difference. He just walks out, starts pegging away with both hands, and flattens the other guy in a hurry.

"He makes no effort to leave the ring. Instead, he looks the joint over and spots me.

"'Hey!' he yells. 'Bring on the next one.'

"Well, the upshot is that he belts out two other opponents and saves the show.

"The kid seems surprised when I pay him off. He cannot understand why good Irishmen should be paid for fighting. He thinks they battle for the hell of it, and it's a pleasure. But I convince him that a kid who can handle his fists as well as he can is capable of picking up a lot of money making a business, instead of a hobby, of fighting. I ask him his name and where he lives. He tells me it's Johnny Russell, and he lives in West Philly.

"I finally drop into the firehouse. No, they don't know of any Johnny Russell, either. I describe him as best I can. It must be a pretty fair sort of description. Eyes start lighting up with recognition.

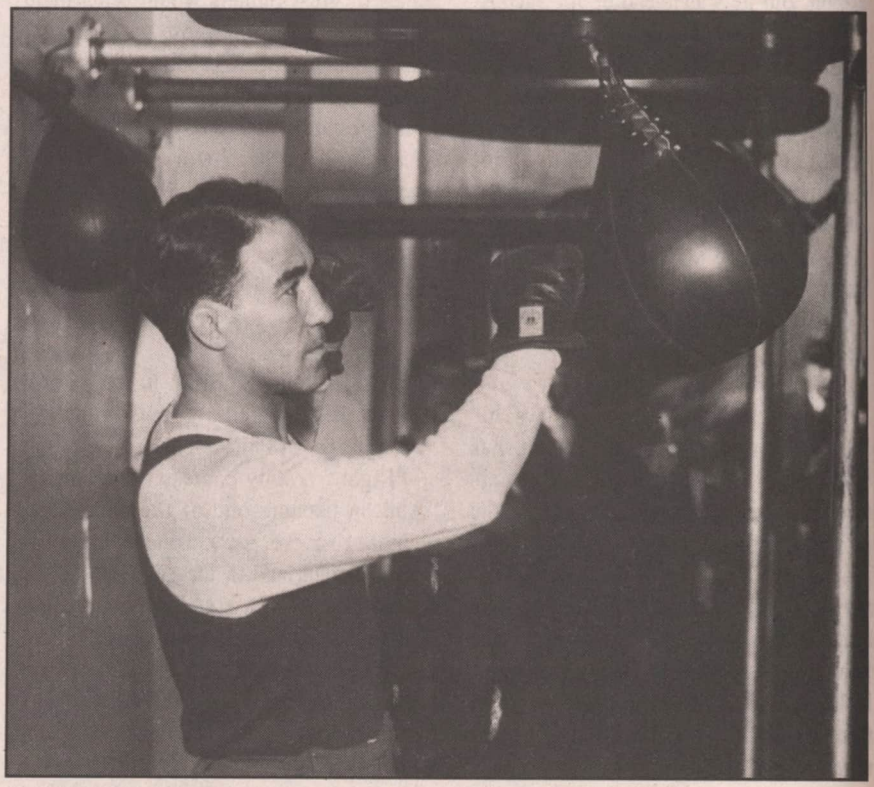
"'Oh,' says one guy, 'you must mean Unk.'

"'I must mean *who*?' I ask.

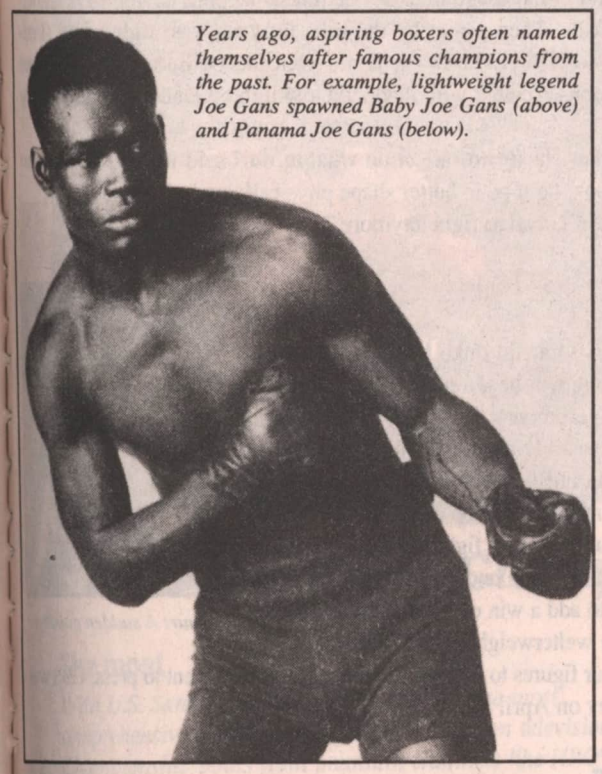
"'Unk,' he repeats, and I'm given the address I'm looking for.

"It develops that Johnny has a flock of older brothers and sisters, all living in the neighborhood, and most of 'em married. As folks believed in big families in those days, the result is a mob of kids. To them all, he's just Unk.

"Well, anyway, I catch up with Johnny—*er*, Unk—and he becomes one of the toughest lightweights in the business. He fought anybody and everybody. If lightweights weren't available, he'd take



With world junior lightweight champion Giuseppe Carrora fighting as Johnny Dundee, a handful of Italian boxers changed their names as well, and the boxing register was suddenly filled with Dundees.

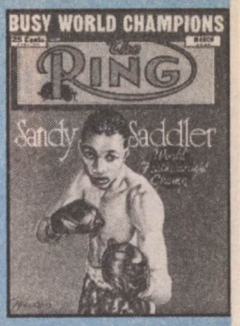


Years ago, aspiring boxers often named themselves after famous champions from the past. For example, lightweight legend Joe Gans spawned Baby Joe Gans (above) and Panama Joe Gans (below).

on welterweights and middleweights. The other guy's size and reputation meant nothing to him. He loved to fight. We could use a couple of Unk Russells around these days."

We felt a great relief when the Old Professor refrained from asking us how the "Jersey" became part of our handle. We do not know whether or not we'd have been able to convince him the old home state was responsible. What if he had confused the connection with a certain well-known brand of cattle? ■

THE RING, March 1949



The Cover: World featherweight champion Sandy Saddler is drawn by outstanding artist (and future publisher of THE RING) Stanley Weston. Inside, Ted Carroll examines the feather champs of the past, including Abe Attell, George Dixon, Terry McGovern, Johnny Dundee, Kid Chocolate, Tony Canzoneri, and Willie Pep.

The Exhibition Tour: Heavyweight champion Joe Louis may not extend his record reign much longer, but he remains a huge attraction. Having learned from champions from John L. Sullivan to Jack Dempsey, "The Brown Bomber" is reaping the rewards of exhibition tours. Will the paydays ever dry up?

The Best Briton Ever?: Jersey Jones looks back at Owen Moran, the 5'3" featherweight who, some argue, was the greatest British prize fighter of them all. Moran was technically superior—and he knew it. The cocky contender faced, among others, Battling Nelson, Abe Attell (five times), and Ad Wolgast.

Boxing On The Island: As reported by Ted Yamachika, the fight game has grown in Hawaii, thanks largely to the efforts of manager Sam Ichinose. Among the world-class fighters guided by "Sad Sam" is outstanding flyweight Dado Marino (pictured).

Fighter Of The Month: Middleweight contender Steve Belloise is honored for his bloody mastery of Frenchman Robert Villemain, who was making his Madison Square Garden debut. Belloise is hoping for a shot at world 160-pound king Marcel Cerdan.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Steve Farhood

THE MILLIONAIRE MARINE

As you read this, what might you guess former heavyweight champion Riddick Bowe is doing at Marine Corps boot camp in Parris Island, South Carolina? Will he be struggling through 50 pushups at the feet of a sadistic drill instructor? Will he be hiking 10 miles with a 50-pound pack on his back? Will he be cleaning a toilet with a toothbrush?

One more question: Will he ever fight again?

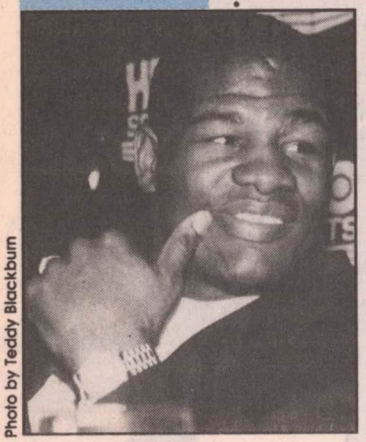


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Bowe: Millionaire Marine

On January 30, Bowe, 29, announced he had enlisted in the Marine Reserves. After three months of boot camp, which was to begin on February 10, and further training, his commitment was to include three years on active reserve, and then five years on inactive reserve.

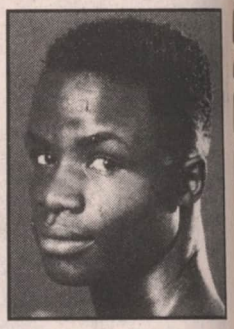
Bowe said joining the Marine Corps had been a lifelong dream. He was prepared to enlist after the 1988 Olympics, but when his wife became pregnant with their second child, he realized it would be difficult to support a growing family on USMC pay.

"I'm not retiring," Bowe said. "When I complete boot camp, I'll resume my boxing career." At least that's what we think Bowe said. He slurred his words throughout the press conference, and even if he wants to fight again, maybe he shouldn't. One theory: By shifting his focus to the Marines, Bowe has, for all intents and purposes, retired, but he did so without having to acknowledge his deteriorating speech and skills. Then again, by the time he's ready to fight again (late-'97), Lennox Lewis and the winner of Holyfield-Tyson II are going to be in need of big-name opposition. And even after his disastrous rematch with Andrew Golota, "Big Daddy" remains a big name.

"This is an opportunity to give [Bowe] further chance to reflect on what to do," said Rock Newman, the heavyweight's manager. "And if he's going to box, he'd be in better shape physically and psychologically.

"Selfishly, I would like him to retire. He doesn't *need* to fight anymore."

LISTEN UP



Tuur: A sudden goodbye

Look for junior featherweight **Junior Jones** to again duke it out with **Marco Antonio Barrera** on April 18 in St. Maarten. There will be a rematch not because the WBO has ordered one, but because it's Jones' biggest money fight. WBA welterweight champion **Ike Quartey** will defend on the card, possibly against **Wilfredo Rivera** … Speaking of rematches, WBC super bantamweight titlist **Daniel Zaragoza** is going to give **Wayne McCullough** another shot … In a surprise move, top-10 junior lightweight **Reggie Tuur** announced his retirement—at least until his next fight. Tuur, who's a larger-than-life hero in Holland, plans on devoting all his time and energy to his personal clothing line … In April, the next up-and-comer to add a win over the faded **Meldrick Taylor** to his resume will be Ohio welterweight **Ken Sigurani** … The next old-timer to join the Seniors Tour figures to be **Donald Curry** … As we went to press, CBS was looking at **David Tua-Oleg Maskaev** on April 5.

Las Vegas Hilton

FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Oscar De La Hoya	Pernell Whitaker	7-2	Oscar getting "Sweet Pea" at right time
Daniel Zaragoza	Wayne McCullough	7-5	Zaragoza continues to amaze
Andrew Golota	Ray Mercer	5-2	Golota can fight, but can he *win* a fight?
Mauricio Pastrana	Michael Carbajal	Pick-'em	Do-or-die time for Carbajal

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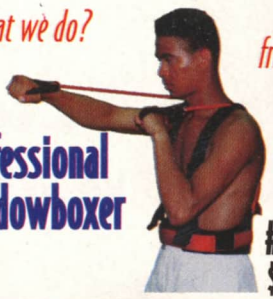

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